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THE THEORY OF IMAGINATION IN
CLASSICAL AND MEDIAEVAL
THOUGHT

BY
MURRAY WRIGHT BUNDY



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**THE THEORY OF IMAGINATION IN
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**THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
1927**

‘Imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint, has always endeavored to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the inclosures of regularity.’

Samuel Johnson, *Rambler*, 125 (1751)

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PREFACE

This book is the first part of what it is hoped will be a comprehensive survey of theories of fancy and imagination. At the outset it was to have been primarily a study in literary criticism, an attempt to determine why at the beginning of the nineteenth century poets and critics should have attached extraordinary importance to terms rarely found, for example, in the criticism of the Renaissance, whence they were derived, and what was meant by them. This was naturally to involve a close study of varying and sometimes contradictory conceptions. The reader hardly needs to be told that 'imagination,' and often 'fancy,' as distinguished from it, are at the heart of the theory of poetry, and especially of the theory of the so-called Romantic movement. He recalls Blake's identification of imagination with the Divine, Wordsworth's characterization of the power as 'reason in her most exalted mood,' and Coleridge's definition of the faculty as a 'repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'; and he knows how easy it is to multiply instances from English writers alone,—from Shelley and Keats, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. What the reader probably wishes to be shown, is, not that there was a surprising unanimity among these critics that poetry is the effluence of the imagination, but why there should have been this unanimity, and why, with all of this substantial agreement about the importance of the terms, there was so little agreement concerning their meaning, especially when the attempt was made to distinguish between them. To answer these questions was the original aim of this investigation.

The writer anticipated a study of the obvious German philosophers, of the English critics of the eighteenth century, and of the Swiss aestheticians. He soon found himself, however, engaged in a quite different study, for Coleridge sent him to the study of the psychology of the Middle Ages, Wordsworth to the entire English empirical tradition, and Blake to the mystics; and these in turn inevitably directed the attention to those great classical philosophies in which the concepts of 'appearance' and 'image' were first defined,—to the systems of Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics and the Neoplatonists. One may be prone to censure the writer for seemingly

allowing his attention to be diverted from his main interest, the definition of a modern critical term; but he believes that he has made no mistake. Without this basic investigation modern definitions cannot be adequately explained. 'Imagination,' in the first place, is not primarily a critical term. When the Greek metaphysician, attempting to distinguish between appearance and reality, used the Greek word from which 'fancy' is derived, important consequences followed for the history of the critical term. When the ancient psychologist sought to establish the relation of imagination to sensation, on the one hand, and to reason, on the other, he also was laying the foundations for the views of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Ruskin. When, in turn, the classical moralists tried to decide whether our fancies were trustworthy guides to conduct, there were resulting implications from which the terms in aesthetic could not well escape. The writer has always proceeded under the assumption that thought is a unit, and that any speculation which affects the concept in one field of thought is likely to affect it in others. This is especially true of the period with which this volume deals, the period of the encyclopaedic minds, when men of great erudition brought their investigations in one field to bear upon their conclusions in others. Plato and Aristotle brought to their thought about fine art the conclusions of the metaphysician, the psychologist, and the moralist. It is for this reason that we shall study, for the most part, the fortunes of our terms in epistemology, in psychology, and in ethics.

Having determined to trace the concepts from the beginning in every field of thought in which they might have been defined, the writer tried also to escape a pitfall into which many had fallen who had written about the imagination, the temptation to substitute criticism for interpretation, to evaluate concepts in the light of one's own theory. He has endeavored at all times to let men speak for themselves and then to understand them. He has tried to explain these utterances as having come from certain schools of thought, from certain personalities, and at certain times. He has not been prone to characterize theories as right or wrong, the views of 'imaginative' or 'unimaginative' men. But, in a sense, he cannot but be critical. Although he may never have evaluated the concepts of Atomist or Sceptic or Stoic by a preconceived ideal of imagination, he comes to be aware of the drift of certain great traditions about 'fancy' and 'imagination'; he recognizes whither they are tending,

and he sees some men, like the Stoics, contributing to constructive theory, and others, like the Sceptics, contributing little or nothing. In this sense, he is bound to be critical. When, in turn, after an intimate acquaintance with modern views, he looks into Plato, or Maimonides, or Dante, he finds in them a recognition of certain truths to which their fellows seemed to be blind; he sees in how many ways they anticipated the concepts of later centuries. It is difficult then not to evaluate, not to call them men of greater insight and imagination.

These aims and methods have made this study quite different from other historical investigations of the imagination. Perhaps the most important of these is Luigi Ambrosi's *La Psicologia della Immaginazione nella storia della filosofia* (Roma, 1898), a book of five hundred and sixty pages, which seems in part to anticipate this volume. But only fifty-four pages (pp. 6-60) are devoted to theories in classical and mediaeval thought. There are six pages dealing with the Atomists; seven with Plato; seven with Aristotle; four with the Stoics; six with the Neoplatonists, five of these being devoted to Plotinus; seventeen with Augustine; three with Thomas Aquinas; and five with Dante. Not only is the space given to these theories from the Atomists to Dante altogether incommensurate with their basic character, but there is also an obvious lack of proportion in the treatment of individuals. Plato and Aristotle together are given some fourteen pages in comparison with the thirty-four pages devoted later to Delille's dull, unoriginal, didactic poem. The enthusiasm for the views of Augustine is more pardonable, but it hardly justifies giving to the exposition of his theories more attention than is given to the concepts of Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, and Dante combined. Little or no space is devoted to the lesser Neoplatonists. Between Augustine and Thomas Aquinas there is also a gap. Probably most disappointing, however, is the failure to see in Dante the synthesis of mediaeval traditions,—to see, for example, in him the flowering of the Platonic notion of imaginative inspiration. But the writer is also glad to acknowledge his indebtedness to this study, a pioneer in the field.

The most comprehensive historical survey of *φαντασία* as an aesthetic term is Bernhard Schweitzer's *Die bildende Künstler und der Begriff des Künstlerischen in der Antike μίμησις und φαντασία* (in *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, 1925, pp. 95 ff.) He has collected significant material; but he has been too anxious to prove a tempt-

ing thesis, briefly stated in the summary (p. 131). The art of the classical epoch, he asserts, was representative, with its source in the object, and with *μίμησις* for its critical term. The art of later antiquity, instead of establishing a relation between the work of art and the object, was interested in the relation between the Divine and the artistic creation, and it found its central principle in the *φαντασία* of the artist. Conclusive evidence of the persistence of this latter view is found, the author believes, in the teachings of the Stoics, especially in the Middle Stoa. Little attempt is made to study the more comprehensive theory of Plato, and little attention is paid to Aristotle. The Stoic view of phantasy is expounded in the light of their doctrines of Fate and Nature (pp. 97-99), and, I must confess, in such a way that I find it difficult to follow the argument. In their conception of *φαντασία* Schweitzer finds important sources of subjective doctrine, especially in its implications for the theory of fine art. This aesthetic view, he believes, becomes explicit in Dio of Prusa and Philostratus. It is true that Stoicism helped to perpetuate a tradition; but it is a tradition deriving from Plato through Aristotle,—a tradition which had less to do with the supremacy of *φαντασία* over *μίμησις* than another Platonic tradition. Although I have not been able to agree with Schweitzer, especially in his interpretations of the Stoics and of Philostratus, I have found his study suggestive and stimulating.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Lane Cooper, of Cornell University, for his unfailing interest in the revision and enlargement of this study, originally pursued under his direction; and to Professor William A. Oldfather for his kindness in aiding a comparative novice to become acquainted with some of the resources of the classical scholar.

MURRAY WRIGHT BUNDY

CHAPTER I

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

The history of 'fancy' and 'imagination' as terms of reflective thought begins with Plato. In the absence of authentic documents indicating exact usage before his time we must have recourse, first, to popular usage, and, second, to the philosophical ideas current before and during his time which were later to be denoted by these terms. We may thus learn to what extent men faced problems which might have involved the definition of *φαντασία* and in what ways the terms used by Plato might have been employed. The method is at best conjectural: we may only surmise from fragments preserved by later writers what philosophical language was used by Empedocles and Parmenides; and what may at first sight appear to be significant examples of the early use of a word may often be only the phraseology of a later writer. The sceptic, Sextus Empiricus, for instance, often our only authority, far from being interested in faithfully reproducing earlier views, uses in quotation the language current in his day in pointing out errors and inconsistencies in the views of his predecessors. Many of these passages contain the word *φαντασία*, because he was anxious to prove that no sense-impression, or, in the language of his time, no phantasy, was true; but we cannot therefore assume that his source employed this terminology.

When we turn to popular usage, the material is more abundant, and with this we may well begin. The nearest Greek equivalent of 'imagination,' *εἰκασία*, is derived from *εἴκω*, 'to be like,' or 'capable of being compared.' From *εἴκω* comes the noun *εἰκών*, indicating the state of being like, an image, or copy, or likeness. This is synonymous with *εἰδωλον*, often used as a philosophical term, but later coming to have the more restricted meaning of 'statue' or 'idol.' From the basic verb, *εἴκω*, came another verb, *εἰκάζω*, with the conventional ending giving the active force, 'to make like,' 'to copy,' 'to imitate,' 'to portray.'¹ In this sense it is used by Euripides: *μητρὸς εἰκασθεὶς τρόποις*.² In turn, a new noun, *εἰκασμα*, is derived,

¹ It may also mean 'to conjecture': see Herodotus, 1. 68; 7. 49.

² *Bacch.*, 1253.

synonymous with *εἰκών*, indicating the result of the process denoted by *εἰκάζω*.³ Finally comes *εἰκασία*, denoting the process or function. This term, however, is not to be found before the time of Plato, and then outside of the Dialogues only once, in a memorable passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*: *γραφικὴ ἐστὶν εἰκασία τῶν ὁρωμένων*.⁴ It is this form alone which seems to imply reflective thought. To talk of one thing as like another, or of a process of copying, is to be in the realm of the unreflective. The term *εἰκασία* alone bears on its face the result of thought concerning the significance of images. Analogy with English usage makes this more apparent: of all the terms derived from Latin *imago*, 'imagination' alone, and its adjective 'imaginative,' imply reflection. 'Image,' 'imaginary,' and 'imagine,' are popular, the uncritical language of the street. We must observe, however, that the thought implied by the word *εἰκασία* relates to the material and the means of expression, rather than to the problem of the process of thought itself; the term does not imply an epistemology.

The more important term, *φαντασία*, has an analogous history. As *εἰκασία* derives from *εἰκω*, so *φαντασία* derives from *φαίνω*, 'to appear,' 'to be apparent,' 'to come to light.' That which appeared was naturally τὸ φαινόμενον, the phenomenon. From *φαίνω* or from the passive, *φαίνομαι*, developed *φαντάζω*, corresponding to *εἰκάζω*, and sometimes having the force of *φαίνω*.⁵ *Φαντάζω* could also mean 'to take a definite appearance,' 'to take shape,'—as of a spectre,⁶—or 'to give oneself an appearance,' 'to exalt oneself.' In Herodotus (7. 10. 5) the god smites with his thunderbolt those who display their pride (*φαντάζεσθαι*). This conception easily led to the noun *φάντασμα*, which came to indicate not only the appearance, the result of the activity implied in the verb, but also a mental state as opposed to a reality.⁷

About the popular use of the word *φαντασία* before the time of Plato we know little. Aëtius quotes Heracleitus: *φωτίζεσθαι πρὸς τὴν φαντασίαν*, literally, 'to shine to the phantasy,' i. e. to appear to shine.⁸ One suspects that the phraseology is that of Aëtius. He also

³ Aeschylus, *Septem*, 510.

⁴ *Mem.* 3., 10. 1.

⁵ *Phoen.*, 93: *μή τις πολιτῶν ἐν τριβῶ φαντάζεται*; and Herodotus, 4. 124.

⁶ *Agamemnon*, 1500.

⁷ See Euripides, *Hec.*, 54, 95, 390.

⁸ Quoted in H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 Aufl., 2 Bände, Berlin, 1912, 1. 74 (59). Aëtius, a doxographer, probably belongs to the first or second century, A. D.

quotes Empedocles as ascribing peculiarities of the child to the phantasy of the pregnant mother, a notion later to become a commonplace of the theory of imagination; but here again the language is doubtless of later origin.⁹ Likewise, to Empedocles is attributed an early association of phantasy and dreams.¹⁰

If this cursory survey leads to any one inference, it is that before the fifth century B. C. the terms had neither the denotations nor connotations of philosophical symbols. People meant as much as we usually mean when we speak of 'image' and 'appearance,' of 'fancying' and 'imagining'; and they probably meant much less. The words were not synonymous because there had as yet been no occasion to associate them, and, of course, the problems had not arisen which were to demand nice differentiation. That stage of thought had not arrived which was to involve discussion concerning the relation of the image to its original, and concerning the nature, cause, and genuineness of our impressions. There was no attempt, for instance, to distinguish between the impression and the image, between *αἰσθησις* and *φαντασία*.

Neither may one expect to find a theory of fine art in terms of 'fancy' and 'imagination,' since it is comparatively late before theory, trying to understand practice, and setting for it an ideal, lays the basis for Greek criticism. Critics do not write about the imagination of Homer, because they are not concerned with the questions which would involve such a concept, and because the terms must first be defined in a metaphysics concerned with the relation of mind to matter before they could become the symbols of philosophically minded critics.

We turn, then, to a sketch of early Greek philosophy with the sole aim of suggesting the problems in connection with which 'fancy' and

⁹ Diels, *op. cit.*, I. 215 (167): 'Ε. τῇ κατὰ τὴν σύλληψιν φαντασίαι τῆς γυναικὸς μορφοῦσθαι τὰ βρέφη. Siebeck (*Geschichte der Psychologie*, 2 Bände, Gotha, 1880, I. 150), however, is inclined to assign this view to the time of Empedocles: 'Der modernen Bedeutung von Phantasie näher liegend erscheint es, wenn Empedokles für das äussere Aussenen des Kindes auf die Vorstellungsthätigkeit der Mutter vor der Geburt Gewicht legte und vielleicht schon den Einfluss hervorhob, welchen der Anblick von Statuen und Bildern nach dieser Seite haben könnte (Plac. phil. V, 11). Von anderweitigen Erscheinungen aus dem Gebiete der Vorstellungen haben das *Gedächtniss* und sein Gegentheil schon frühzeitig psychologische Erklärungsversuche veranlasst.'

¹⁰ Diels, *op. cit.*, I. 261 (203), quoting Philoponus: ἐκ τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἐνεργημάτων αἱ νυκτερινὰ γίνονται φαντασίαι. See also Leo Meyer, *Handbuch der Griechischen Etymologie*, Dritter Band, Leipzig, 1901, p. 383.

'imagination' would be likely to receive their first definitions. No attempt is made to be comprehensive or to suggest questions in their chronological order.

Early in the course of reflection comes the consciousness of the difference between subject and object, between man as thinker, and the object of his thought. This object of thought might be called 'that which appeared' τὸ φαινόμενον, or φάντασμα, or perhaps φαντασία; and the first impulse would be to regard this phantasm as wholly external, a material cause of thought. This is what the word would have meant to the early Ionian physicists; and even a thinker as late as Empedocles would probably have spoken of phantasies as things rather than as mental states, for he did not distinguish between thought and perception.¹¹ Later comes the notion that the impression and the stimulus are not identical, and then 'phantasy' comes to indicate the former. This belief might, indeed, be presented in a most materialistic fashion, as when Democritus asserted that εἰδῶλα flew off from objects and thus caused impressions.¹² The significant fact, however, is that these 'idols' and the resulting phantasies are different.¹³ Although there is as yet no conception of a function of the mind, 'phantasy' is on the road to being a term of psychology, and eventually of ethics and aesthetics.

This second way of regarding phantasies (as essentially different from their external stimuli) would lead naturally to the comparison of the impression with its cause, and this immediately suggests the problem of the truth or falsity of these states of mind. When this stage of thought arrives, 'phantasy' is intimately bound up with a basic concern of epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, for the correspondence of appearance to reality has ever been vital for all three. But this definition of 'phantasy' came comparatively late. The Pythagoreans, for instance, identified reality with that which could

¹¹ John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., London, 1908, p. 288.

¹² Siebeck, *op. cit.*, I. 111.

¹³ H. Diels, *op. cit.*, 2. 43 (375), quoting Theophrastus, *De Sensu*: τῶν δὲ ἄλλων αἰσθητῶν οὐδενὸς εἶναι φύσιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα πάθῃ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἀλλοιούμενης, ἐξ ἧς γίνεσθαι τὴν φαντασίαν. Democritus may have used τὸ φαινόμενον; *vide supra*, 2. 37 (370-1) quoting Philopon., *De Anima*, and Cicero, *Epist.* xv. J. I. Beare, *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition from Alcmaeon to Aristotle*, Oxford, 1906, p. 255-6, says that by φαντασία Democritus did not mean the reproductive imagination, but only a presentative faculty, and that his views concerning the reproductive faculty cannot be ascertained. See also Siebeck, *op. cit.*, I. 150.

be perceived by the senses.¹⁴ They would have said that all our phantasies were true. Anaxagoras, on the other hand, who probably taught that the weakness of our senses prevents our discerning the truth,¹⁵ would have insisted that these phantasies are not necessarily true.

These probable views of Anaxagoras and the Pythagoreans suggest two extreme positions, both of which would have had an unfavorable effect upon 'phantasy.' It is a short step from the view of the latter to a doctrine of relativity and of subjectivity which insists that individual phantasies, precisely because they are individual, are true. Sextus Empiricus is authority for the statement that Democritus and Plato, in opposition to Protagoras, taught that not every phantasy is true.¹⁶ Although Sextus may here be referring to Protagoras in phraseology suited to his purpose, it is likely that the latter used the term in his doctrine of relativity. In the light of certain utterances of Plato, and especially his exposition of the doctrines of the Sophists, it is probable that they did assert that their phantasies were true.

Plato is quite likely also to have heard the equally extreme position that no phantasy can be true, because it is a state of mind rather than an external reality. Truth, indeed, can never be known. If we may believe Sextus, Xenias the Corinthian taught that 'everything is false, and every phantasy and opinion is false, and from that which is not springs all that is.'¹⁷ We may have here an early association of *φαντασία* and *δόξα* which may help to account for their constant association in the thought of Plato. Gorgias is also likely to have asserted that one could not put one's trust in phantasies. Scepticism such as his would have meant, along with the denial of a criterion of truth, the denial of a constructive theory of phantasy. 'Phantasy,' as we have seen, implies a relation between subject and object; but for Gorgias there was, between thought and reality, between words and things, an abyss which nothing could bridge.¹⁸

¹⁴ Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 331. The only reference to their views is probably in phraseology of later date: *τινὲς δὲ κατοπτρικὴν εἶναι φαντασίαν τοῦ ἡλλοῦ τὰς αὐγὰς πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνακλῶντος* (Diels, *op. cit.*, 1. 356 (278), quoting Aëtius, 3. 1. 2).

¹⁵ Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 316-7.

¹⁶ *Sexti Empirici Opera*, ed. Fabricius, 2 vols., Lipsiae, 1840-1, *adv. Math.*, 7. 389, quoted in Diels, *op. cit.*, 2. 224 (531).

¹⁷ Sextus, *adv. Math.*, 7. 53, in Diels, *op. cit.*, 2. 235 (543).

¹⁸ A. E. Chaignet, *Histoire de la Psychologie des Grecs*, 5 vols., Paris, 1887-93, 1. 133.

Early scepticism, like early subjectivism, is hostile to a constructive theory of phantasy.

The first monistic theories were equally unfavorable. The early Greek thinkers, beginning with the Ionian naturalists, were interested in finding some one substance in terms of which all else could be explained. When this ceased to be the search of the physicist, and became the quest of the metaphysician, important consequences were likely to follow for 'phantasy.' For truth, the one substance, was, for these monists, unchanging and immovable, despite all phantasy and appearance of frequent change. If it is true 'that Greek philosophy began, as it ended, with the search for what was abiding in the flux of things',¹⁹ it is also true that it could attach little dignity to a term so closely associated with opinion as opposed to reality. Xenophanes, the great exponent of early monistic theory, usually regarded as the founder of the Eleatic school, is quoted by Aristocles as having said that 'it is necessary to put down the senses and the phantasies, and to trust only to the reason.'²⁰ This statement is probably nearer to the truth than that of Sextus. The distinction between *αἰσθησις* and *φαντασία* may be only in the phrasing of Aristocles. The opposition of phantasy and reason at an early date is to be remarked, since it was soon to become a commonplace of theories of imagination. Aristocles adds that Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus also taught this. About Parmenides, at least, one may be more certain. In teaching that there is but one substance he insisted that one give up the notion that there might be different possible appearances, i. e. phantasies.²¹ The senses, which present to us a world of change, are deceptive.²² 'The existence of a realm of mere appearance is incompatible with the fundamental principle of Parmenides.'²³ 'The appearances of multiplicity and motion, empty space and time, are illusions.'²⁴ Zeno, the friend and pupil of Parmenides, similarly attacked the veracity of the senses.²⁵ This would naturally involve an unfavorable estimate

¹⁹ Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁰ Diels, *op. cit.*, I. 54 (43).

²¹ F. Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, tr. by G. S. Morris, 2 vols., New York, 1891, I. 56.

²² Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

²³ Ueberweg, *op. cit.*, I. 57.

²⁴ Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

²⁵ Ueberweg, *op. cit.*, I. 58, quoting Aristotle, *Physica*, 7. 5.

of 'phantasy,' in so far as that term was used to denote the presentations of the senses.

The assumption that this early belief in one substance had as its corollary a belief in its immateriality Burnet is at special pains to disprove.²⁶ Not only did the Ionian physicists fail to distinguish between matter and spirit, but even in the time of Anaxagoras and the Pythagoreans the distinction had not been made. All early thought, Burnet says, moved wholly in the region of the *Vorstellung*,—a generalization intended to comprehend the Eleatic school, and thus including Parmenides as one who had not conceived of an immaterial reality, of an idea as opposed to a thing. Even if Burnet is right, it is also true that speculation concerning the One as opposed to the Many would cause thinkers to regard this One as immaterial. By the time of Plato, at least, men associated belief in the Being of the Eleatics with a belief in incorporeal reality, which could be called neither phantasy nor image, and which could be comprehended by no mental power to be denoted by the word 'phantasy.' This notion, of course, may owe too much to the language of Plato; but, whether Pre-Socratic philosophy conceived of an immaterial reality or not, the concept, when it came, would necessarily be inimicable to a constructive theory of phantasy.

We have described briefly six problems of early Greek philosophy which would naturally affect *φαντασία*: (1) the distinction between thought and the object of thought, the necessary condition for reflection; (2) the problem of the correspondence of the impression to external reality; (3) the question of relativity, involving extreme subjectivism, on one hand, and scepticism, on the other; (4) the problem of monism and pluralism; (5) the problem of change and stability; and (6) the pervasive problem of materialism. All of these problems might have involved, and some of them did involve, a consideration of our 'phantasies.' The distinction between stimulus and sensation brought recognition of *φαντασία* as something in the mind as opposed to *τὸ φαινόμενον*; and thus caused the association of 'phantasy' with 'sensation' and 'impression.' The correspondence of these impressions to their stimuli involved, of course, the question of the trustworthiness of our phantasies, and, in conjunction with the problem of the relation of truth to the individual, resulted in two extreme views, that all phantasies are true,

²⁶ Burnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 206.

and that no phantasies are true, both unfavorable to a theory of *φαντασία*. It can also be seen that a term which at best denoted the presentations of the senses as distinct from the 'idols' which flew off from things, and which, in lieu of an epistemology which could define mental processes, could not be carefully distinguished from sensation and impression, would also be viewed in an unfavorable light by those who insisted upon the reality of a single, immaterial, unchangeable substance. Up to the time of Plato there was no comprehensive view of the relation of matter to spirit, of the outer to the inner, necessary to an adequate conception of the nature and function of 'phantasy.' It was only after Plato had built up out of these materials, in part, his great philosophical system that there could come into being, from such unfavorable beginnings, a theory of imagination.

CHAPTER II

PLATO¹

In the Dialogues of Plato there are utterances concerning the imagination as significant and as important in their influence upon later theory as the comparable views of Aristotle. It is the Platonic conception, rather than the Aristotelian, from which the great modern theories ultimately derive; yet it is the conception of Aristotle which was from the first the object of careful exposition, and which during the Middle Ages was the basis of the more prevalent tradition. The reasons for this comparative neglect of Plato's opinions are not far to seek. The directness of Aristotle's method in comparison with the subtle art of his master rendered the views of the former much easier of comprehension, while much of the suggestiveness of Plato's views has been lost through lack of sympathy with his artistic purposes. Sympathetic interpretation is the more difficult because the dialogue as a species of drama is capable of representing a unified action—in this instance the development of a philosophical system—having beginning, middle, and end. Plato through his artistic medium may be representing the drama of reflective thought as it passed through intermediary stages to arrive at its artistic solution. From this point of view it is reasonable to believe that the Dialogues represent the growth of a philosophy; and much, in consequence, depends upon the proper order. For this investigation it has seemed best to accept, tentatively at least, Lutoslawski's arrangement,² in which the writings are divided into four groups: an early Socratic group; an early Platonic group, including of the Dialogues which concern us the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*; a middle Platonic group, containing the greater part of the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Theaetetus*; and a final group in which the *Sophist*, *Philebus*, and *Timaeus* find place.

Acceptance of this order would point to the fact that the earliest Dialogues involve none of the problems with which *φαντασία* and

¹ Reprinted, by permission, with slight alterations, from *Studies in Philology*, Vol. xix, No. 4 (October, 1922).

² See W. Lutoslawski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, London, 1897, Chapter 2; for a convenient table see J. A. Stewart, *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*, Oxford, 1909, pp. 14-15.

εἰκαστα are concerned. With the period of 'Early Platonism' there comes a distinct doctrine of ideas as 'absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting.' At this point Plato seems to have been so far in sympathy with the view attributed to Parmenides that he conceived of reality as not only above but entirely separate from sensible experience. In this view knowledge was altogether divorced from opinion. This position he seems to have modified by the time of the *Republic*; because he saw that no philosophy could be satisfactory which insisted upon the reality of the Absolute as opposed to the Relative, of the One as opposed to the Many, and of Knowledge as opposed to Opinion. He was forced to give up the old monism, and to face certain very apparent paradoxes,—quite unintelligible to a consistent Parmenidean. Not the least important of these was the statement that there could be a true opinion. Finally, in the last Dialogues he seems to have fully recognized that the unideal, the relative, the particular, and the sensible were realities which demanded explanation as well as the ideal, the absolute, the general, and the immaterial. All of these notions must be included in his final belief. Thus he was led to institute a critical philosophy, which, in the light of these facts, profoundly modified the earlier belief, and issued in the well-tempered views of the *Timaeus*, the *Critias*, and the *Laws*.

In the early 'Socratic' Dialogues there is no theory of imagination. Not until we come to the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium* is there a definite attitude towards phantasies and images—an attitude quite in keeping with an early belief in the Eleatic notion of Absolute Being. Even here the utterances do not imply conscious theory. In the *Cratylus* the Platonic Socrates insists that the function of a name, like the function of a painting, is to render, though by different means, an imitation of the thing;³ and he who by syllables and letters imitates the nature of things, if he gives all that is appropriate, will produce a good image (*εἰκὼν*), or, in other words, a name.⁴ But Socrates, quite in sympathy with the Eleatic doctrine, insists that the analogy of painting shows the limitation of names: for drawing, painting, and music, as imitations concerned with form and sound, and color, cannot be concerned also

³ 430 B; B. Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, Third ed., 5 vols., Oxford, 1892, I. 376. Hereafter referred to as Jowett.

⁴ 431 C; Jowett, I. 378.

with the essences of each thing.⁵ Only a god could create an image, or portrait, which, transcending the limits of form and color, would imitate also the inward organization of the man, thus reproducing internal as well as external qualities. The images both of the painter and of the one who gives names to things come far from reproducing their originals; for God alone can create the true form of things.⁶ It is for man, then, not 'to learn of the image, whether the image and the truth of which the image is the expression have been rightly conceived [lit. 'imaged,' *εἰκασταί*], [but] to learn of the truth whether the truth and the image of it have been duly executed.'⁷ 'Knowledge of things is not to be derived from names'—or, Plato might have added, from the images of the fine arts. 'Let us seek the true beauty, not asking whether a particular face is fair, for all such things appear to be in a flux.'⁸ Plato at this point could hardly have held an exalted view of the rôle of imagination in the fine arts.

His early conception of phantasies is equally unconstructive. It is natural that this attack upon the particular and the material should have been closely connected with a similar attack upon the Protagorean doctrine of the relativity of knowledge. It is with such an attack that the dialogue begins and ends. 'Things are not relative to individuals,' says Socrates, but 'must be supposed to have their own proper and permanent essence: they are not in relation to us, or influenced by us, fluctuating according to our fancy [*ἐλκόμενα ἄνω καὶ κάτω τῷ ἡμετέρῳ φαντάσματι*].'⁹

That his attack upon phantasies is of a piece with his discussion of images is evident when we connect this first discussion of relativity with the last growing immediately out of his consideration of images. A particular portrait, he had said, could never reproduce internal qualities by means of images. One must seek true beauty, and not ask whether a particular face is fair, for all such things appear to be in a flux. 'Can we rightly speak of a beauty which is always passing away, and is first this and then that? . . . Nor can we reasonably say that there is knowledge at all, if everything is in a state of transition and there is nothing abiding. . . . If . . . the beautiful and

⁵ 423 D, E, 424 A; Jowett, I. 369.

⁶ 432 B, C; Jowett, I. 378-9.

⁷ 439 A; Jowett, I. 387.

⁸ 439 D.

⁹ 386 E; Jowett, I. 326-7.

the good . . . exist, then I do not think that they can resemble a process or flux.'¹⁰ The Parmenidean belief in an Absolute Beauty and an Absolute Good constituted for Plato the antidote to a dangerous doctrine of relativity and of materialism. An early doctrine of relativity accepted implicitly the truth of phantasies; and the consequent materialism accepts the truth of material images. Plato in attacking the underlying theory denies at this stage in his thought the reality of these images and phantasies.

A casual reference to *φαντασία* in the *Symposium* seems to confirm this interpretation. Attacking both materialism and relativity, the *Symposium* stands in much the same relation to the fine arts as the *Cratylus* to dialectic. In that famous passage concerning the ideal poet who has had adequate instruction in abstract love and beauty, Socrates quotes Diotima as saying: 'He will have a view of an everlasting rather than a changing nature, not one fair from one point of view, foul from another, nor will he fancy [*φαντασθήσεται*] the beautiful as a face or hands or any other part of the body.'¹¹

These are, so far as we are aware, the first occurrences of the terms in the theory of fine art. They come in connection with a *prima philosophia* inimicable to a constructive theory of fine art recognizing necessary bases in material reality. Hence there is in this early stage of Plato's thought no place either for a theory of imitation or for a theory of symbolism in the light of which our terms become the staple of criticism; at this point Plato could not have had constructive theories of fancy and imagination.

This early phase of his thought also results in a denial of a divine art of phantasy. In *Republic II* Socrates asks whether God is a magician 'and of a nature to appear [*φαντάζεσθαι*] now in one shape and now in another.'¹² This question is suggested by the practice of the poets in representing the gods as assuming many shapes. Socrates answers that 'it is impossible that God should ever be willing to change.' 'Can you imagine that God will be willing to lie, whether in word or deed, or to put forth a phantom [*φάντασμα*] of himself?'¹³ 'He is perfectly simple and true both in word and deed; he changes not; he deceives not, [either by phantasies] or by sign

¹⁰ 439 D-440 B; Jowett, 1. 387-8.

¹¹ 211 A.

¹² 380 D; Jowett, 3. 63.

¹³ 381 E; Jowett, 3. 65.

or word, by dream or waking vision.’¹⁴ The phantasy has as little to do with divine activity as with human.

It is a fact, however, that man is deceived by phantasies, by false appearances. To that extent phantasies are real. In consequence we find Plato modifying his uncompromising idealism to account for them. Gradually a dualism comes to take the place of this early monism inherited from Parmenides: by the side of the genuine world of immutable ideas he is willing to recognize the existence of a realm of shadows and impressions. When he takes that step in the development of his thought, he has recourse to an analysis of the functioning of the mind; psychology takes the place of the old theology. It is true that Plato is still interested primarily in the ideal and the immaterial; but an important step has been taken in the history of our terms when ‘phantasy’ is thought of as a mental function, even though it is assigned to the lower part of our nature. It is by one’s rational powers that one attains vision of absolute beauty. Hence before one is to have such vision in sleep, appetite and passion, residing in the irrational part, must be allayed. Only then can reason attain truth most nearly, for only then are the deceptions of dreams least likely to be fancied (καὶ ἥκιστα παράνομοι τότε αἱ ὕψεις φαντάζονται τῶν ἐνυπνίων).¹⁵ Here is, indeed, no high conception of ‘phantasy’; but here is at least the conception of a real mental function capable of analysis, and from the outset connected with man’s appetite and feelings.

In the sixth and seventh books of the *Republic* one finds conceptions of ‘phantasy’ and ‘imagination’ much in advance of the earlier views. We have already glanced at a passage in *Republic IX* (probably earlier than intermediate portions of the *Dialogue*) in which the process of ‘phantasying’ is regarded as real, although assigned to the functions of the lower soul. In *Republic VI*, as psychology comes to take the place of the early metaphysic—or theology—there is found a constructive view of phantasy and imagination involving their relation to other mental powers, and their bearing upon the problem of knowledge. Not only is the existence of two worlds recognized, but by means of this psychology a definite relation is established between them. This is the foundation of Plato’s constructive view of the fine arts, and of the rôle of phantasy and imagination; for only when he took into account

¹⁴ 382 E; Jowett, 3. 67; Jowett omits κατὰ φαντασίας.

¹⁵ 571 E, 572 A; Jowett, 3. 281.

the shifting phenomena of nature, as well as absolute, unchanging ideality, was he able to consider the poet's media of expression; and only when he considered as matter for psychology the fact that man had a faculty of opinions as well as a faculty of knowledge properly so-called, could he consider in all its aspects the poet's power of conception.

Here, as in the earlier Dialogues, Plato continues to attach primary importance to the realm of Being, rather than to that of Becoming. The soul for him is like the eye: 'when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight of becoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence.'¹⁶ Plato insists that truth is a matter of right vision, and is the first, so far as we know, to talk about the eye of the mind. At this point in his thought, however, the imagination could hardly be regarded as such an eye; rather, the powers which are our present concern seem to be hindrances to spiritual vision. But his study of psychology was to lead to new conclusions.

He asks the reader to think of these two worlds—the one of Ideas, and the other of material objects—under the figure of a line equally divided, one portion to be called 'intellectual,' the other 'visible.'¹⁷ Each part in turn is to be divided into similarly unequal parts. One portion of the line of the 'visible' will represent everything that grows or is made; while the other will stand for their images (*εἰκόνες*). These may be of two types: shadows (*σκιάς*), or phantasms (*φαντάσματα*) such as one sees either in water or in mirrors. Here the images are distinctly resemblances of material reality. Of the three types mentioned, two, carefully distinguished from shadows, are called specifically 'phantasms.' These 'phantasms' are thus a sub-division of the general class, 'images.' All of these stand in the relation to things as the sphere of opinion to the sphere of knowledge.

Of the other part of the line 'there are two sub-divisions, in the lower of which the soul uses the figures given by the former division [i. e. of things] as images; the enquiry can only be hypothetical, and instead of going upwards to a principle descends to

¹⁶ 508 D; Jowett, 3. 209.

¹⁷ 509 D; Jowett, 3. 211.

the other end; in the higher of the two, the soul passes out of hypotheses, and goes up to a principle which is above hypotheses, making no use of images as in the former case, but proceeding only in and through the ideas themselves.¹⁸

And now corresponding to these four divisions, let there be four faculties in the soul—reason [*νόησιν*] answering to the highest, understanding [*διάνοιαν*] to the second, faith (or conviction) [*πίστιν*] to the third, and imagination [*εἰκασίαν*]¹⁹ to the last.²⁰

It is evident that Plato's psychology is based upon his dualism. His first term, *νόησις*, denotes the power by which one has insight, an intuition of Ideas, and thus is the faculty of knowledge in the highest sense. His third term, *πίστις*, represents a mental function which in the earlier Dialogues could hardly have been recognized, because it involves the acceptance of a world of things about which one may have only opinion instead of knowledge.²¹ Plato evidently implies the logical proportion: reason, the power of contemplating Ideas, stands to faith, the power of looking at the phenomenal world, as understanding (*διάνοια*), the capacity for scientific knowledge, stands to imagination (*εἰκασίαν*), the power of making shadows, or of framing conjectures, concerning the universe of things; or, again, as scientific knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) is to opinion. The last two pairs of terms stand, as we shall see, in especially close relation.

The second power, *διάνοια*, and the fourth, *εἰκασία*, are both concerned with images. For each of the two realms of Being and of Becoming Plato has a theory of imagination. There may be an imagination of Ideas, and an imagination of material objects, an activity concerned with knowledge, and a corresponding activity concerned only with opinion. There will be dianoetic images connected with scientific knowledge in the same way that there are simple images connected with opinion.

About images of this first type Plato has much to say. The rough representation of a triangle which the mathematician draws to aid him in his thought is a good example of the material image in the service of the scientific understanding.²² This image is not

¹⁸ 510 B; Jowett, 3. 211.

¹⁹ Jowett translates: 'perceptions of shadows.'

²⁰ 511 D-E; Jowett, 3. 213.

²¹ *ἐπιστήμη*, the result of *διάνοια*.

²² 510 C; Jowett, 3. 212.

identical with the shadow or the phantasm in the water or in the mirror, enumerated as types of *εἰκασία*. In this case, while it is true that one is making use of visible forms, one is thinking, not of these, but of the ideals which they resemble;²³ not of the figures actually drawn (e.g. three lines in chalk), but of the absolute square and the absolute diameter, the mental concepts. These higher images differ from those in the lower sphere of vision mainly in their higher purpose, the quest of a supra-sensible reality. Essentially they belong to the lower realm of change and opinion. But whereas in simple imagination (*εἰκασία*) the aim is merely to reproduce the material object, in the higher sphere the lower world of phenomena furnishes the material out of which the understanding constructs schematic images in order to arrive at scientific truth.

This conception applied to fine art might have resulted in a theory of symbolism. This, it is true, could not have led to poetry of the highest sort, for the loftiest art for Plato was that described in the *Symposium*, where the poet, impelled by love, will have eyes to see the true beauty, the divine beauty, 'pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colors and vanities of human life.' 'Beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities.'²⁴ Art of this type is as high above art dependent upon concrete representations as the realm of Ideas is above that of scientific generalization, as *νόησις* is above *διάνοια*. Such art has no need of imagination in any sense in which Plato has yet defined it.

But even in the *Symposium* it seems as if there is place for this higher type of imagination just described. For there 'the true order of going. . . is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only.'²⁵ Surely the use of the image in the service of the understanding would have constituted no unimportant step. But neither in the *Symposium* nor in the *Republic* is there an explicit theory of the symbolic imagination in fine art. The materials, however, for such a theory were at hand. It is alone surprising that the scientist and the mathematician had been specifically recognized as men of imagination before the painter and the poet. The latter were still concerned

²³ 510 D.

²⁴ 211 D-212 A; Jowett, I. 582.

²⁵ 211 C; Jowett, I. 581.

with that lower kind of image-making, *εἰκασία*, rather than with the creation of images in the service of conceptual thought.

In the allegorical myth immediately following this description, at the beginning of Book VII, it is the artist who is contemplated throughout in the account of the worker in *εἰκασία*, making likenesses of material objects. 'And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials. . . ?'²⁶ The activity of the sculptor thus becomes the type of the lowest art. Judged by the Socratic ideal, a person pleased with such shadows has no true vision. 'The truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.'²⁷ 'As being is to becoming, so is pure intellect to opinion. And as intellect is to opinion, so is science to belief, and understanding to imagination [*εἰκασία*].'²⁸

The first impulse of the disciple of Parmenides is to deny that the world of sense-impressions exists, and hence to regard phantasies and images as unreal. Once it is seen, however, that the world of things cannot be so easily ignored, the next impulse is to substitute a dualism in which the two realms are sharply divorced. Then comes the attempt to bring them together, to explain one in terms of the other. Of this impulse Plato seems to give evidence in the *Symposium*. In *Republic VI-VII*, however, is the first significant attempt to bridge the gulf,—and, especially significant for us, in terms of 'imagination.' It is important that Plato's psychology led him to assert that things could constitute for conceptual thought images of the higher realm of ideas. It is no great step to the position that the world of phenomena is an image of this ideal world.

But such a theory—especially in its bearing on fine art—he is not ready to espouse. He insists, rather, throughout the *Republic* upon the transcendental character of Ideas. It is this dualism which is at the bottom of his attack upon the poets and painters in the tenth book. In the ideal state poetry is to have no place, for 'all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers. . . . The knowledge of their true nature is the only antidote to them.'²⁹ It is the aim of Socrates to show that they

²⁶ 514 E; Jowett, 3. 214.

²⁷ 515 C; Jowett, 3. 215.

²⁸ 534 A; Jowett, 3. 237.

²⁹ 595 B; Jowett, 3. 307.

are not concerned with Ideas, the object of *νόησις*, but with this lowest type of *εἰκασία*. This he proposes to do through a discussion of creative or poetic art in general. God creates in the highest sense when he brings into being the idea e.g. of bed.³⁰ This is clearly in the realm of *νόησις*. Now the carpenter can make a particular bed 'in accordance with the idea,' i.e. in keeping with his power to comprehend the general notion of bed; 'but no artificer makes the ideas themselves.'³¹ This activity is clearly in the realm in which faith was said to operate; the artisan creates a material thing, which is only an image of a higher idea. A third man, however, comes forward, claiming to be a creator in that he proclaims himself capable of all the works of the other workmen, 'not only vessels of every kind, but plants and animals, himself and all other things—the earth and heaven, and the things which are in heaven or under the earth; he makes the gods also.'³² This can be done merely by turning a mirror around and around.³³ Through such a process of *μίμησις* they too claim to be creators.

But this painter, or sculptor, or poet,—especially if he be a dramatic poet,—would be a maker of appearances only.³⁴ Even the carpenter, for all his labor, could not make the idea which is the essence of the bed, but only a particular bed; his work was 'an indistinct expression of truth.'³⁵ How much less claim, then, has the painter to the designation of 'creator' (*δημιουργόν*), or even to that of 'poet' (*ποιητήν*).³⁶ Rather, both he and the tragic poet are imitators 'thrice removed from the king and from the truth.'³⁷ Thus the plastic arts and the drama in particular are to be censured as species of imitation, i.e. dealing with images or faint reflections of truth rather than with truth itself, with products of imagination rather than with ideas.

It is apparent that Plato has had in mind throughout the discussion the psychology of Book VI, and that he here deals with at least three of the four functions therein described. God's creative activity is the result of Divine Intelligence, to which man's highest

³⁰ 597 B; Jowett, 3. 309.

³¹ 596 B; Jowett, 3. 308.

³² 596 C.

³³ 596 D.

³⁴ 596 E; Jowett, 3. 309.

³⁵ 597 A.

³⁶ 597 D; Jowett, 3. 310.

³⁷ 597 E.

capacity, *νόησις*, at least faintly corresponds. It is the creative function analogous to the highest capacity for knowledge, the contemplation of God's creation in its eternal nature. The human 'maker' works in a realm imitative of this higher realm, that in which *πίστις* is the chief faculty. The painter and the poet, imitating only the creations of others, concerned with the image of an image, are clearly in the realm of *εἰκασία*.³⁸ Their imitations constitute image-making of this most material type, 'imagination' in its most literal sense. The plastic artists in general are thus seemingly depreciated as imitative or imaginative. The latter term suggests in Greek as well as in English 'the idea of a solid body—of "images" in the sense of the plaster-cast cry about the streets.'³⁹ These artists are makers of likenesses rather than contemplators of eternal ideas.

But a still more serious charge was to be brought against painting in particular—and, we may add, the plastic arts in general, and poetry as it is comparable. The painter, says Socrates, deals in phantasy as well as in imagination.

Plato makes nice use of the two terms. When he speaks of an image, he is thinking of the correspondence of the likeness to the original, whether idea or material object. Thus the carpenter's bed and the picture of the bed are both images, although the former product is not brought under the term *εἰκασία*. His use of the terms *φαντασία* and *φάντασμα*, on the other hand, implies no necessary reference to an original, certainly never to one which is immaterial. The artisan's bed may be called an 'image' but never a 'phantasm.' For these terms properly suggest the picture set up in the mind as the result of sensation, the individual appearance or impression, sometimes with no reference to its validity, often with a strong presumption of its unreliability. Reflections in the water and in mirrors are 'phantasies'; there is no assurance that the reflections are true, or that they will produce the same impressions in different individuals. They are in these respects typical of our mental processes; but they are also images of the external world. Hence the term 'phantasies,' comprehending for the most part these lower 'images,' could be used for the class as a whole, especially when one did not have in mind the correspondence to an original. Thus, although

³⁸ One might also have added by way of anticipation that the function of *διάνοια* would be represented in the constructive scientist who studies phenomena in order to 'create' a general law.

³⁹ Leigh Hunt, *What is Poetry?* ed. by A. S. Cook, Boston, 1893, p. 33.

'phantasies' belong under the general term 'images,' it is natural that the former should in the thought of Plato—and in Greek thought in general—come to be used as the comprehensive term.

Added impulse was given to this tendency when Socrates charged the painter with laboring in the field of phantasy: he deals with objects, not as they are, but as they appear. To explain:

You may look at a bed from different points of view, obliquely or directly or from any other point of view, and the bed will appear different, but there is no difference in reality. And the same of all things.

Yes, he said, the difference is only apparent.

Now let me ask you another question: Which is the art of painting designed to be—an imitation of things as they are, or as they appear—of appearance [*φαντάσματος*] or of reality?

Of appearance.⁴⁰

The charge against the painter—and the sculptor and the dramatist—is that through phantasy they become subjective artists. Not only are they concerned with material objects rather than with ideas, but they insist upon reproducing this material world from their peculiar points of view. Imagination leads the artist to deal with the material, the changing, the objects of opinion. Phantasy leads him to an error still more serious: to deal with the individual and the relative. He is by so much farther from the absolute, unchanging ideal.

And the same objects appear straight when looked at out of the water, and crooked when in the water;⁴¹ and the concave becomes convex, owing to the illusion about colors to which sight is liable. Thus every sort of confusion is revealed within us; and this is that weakness of the human mind on which the art of conjuring and of deceiving by light and shadow and other ingenious devices imposes, having an effect upon us like magic.⁴²

By phantasy the vision of the artist is liable to be distorted, for phantasy is prey to all those influences symbolized by the deceptive surface of the water, where a ripple may at any moment distort the reflection, or by the relatively imperfect mirrors of the time, in a word, by man's lower appetitive nature. It will be remembered that Plato had already placed phantasy in the irrational soul, the seat of the appetites and passions.

⁴⁰ 598 B; Jowett, 3. 311.

⁴¹ *Vide supra*, p. 24.

⁴² 602 C, D; Jowett, 3. 316.

Moreover, the artist pursues his work with neither real knowledge nor true opinion about the goodness or badness of his imitations. He will know little of the art of healing or horsemanship when writing of these.

And still he will go on imitating without knowing what makes a thing good or bad, and may be expected therefore to imitate only that which appears to be good to the ignorant multitude.⁴³

Such in its relation to the theory of phantasy and imagination is the substance of Plato's attack upon the fine arts, and especially upon dramatic poetry. The strictures, if taken literally, would seem to condemn the art of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, and belittle those very powers in virtue of which Plato is a creative artist. One would like to think, rather, that the censure of Homer and his fellow-artists is put into the mouth of Socrates to indicate what logically ought to be said about fine art if the Eleatic doctrine of the One were to be consistently applied. This would make the *Republic*, or at least the tenth book, in part an essay in criticism: the Eleatic doctrine fails to offer a satisfactory theory of fine art. Art was condemned by this uncompromising idealism precisely because it worked through phantasy and imagination. Such a view would constitute a *reductio ad absurdum* of the philosophy out of which it grew. An adequate philosophy must explain the activity of the artists rather than deny the reality of their products. Plato was perhaps criticizing a philosophy which he had come to see must be hostile to art because it could recognize neither its materials nor its method.

But Plato's critical philosophy and his art constituted a fine two-edged sword: it could cut in another direction. It is probable that he was hostile to much of the art of his day, and the theory by which it was defended. The common remark made about Greek art is that it is objective; and it is perfectly natural that objective art should take 'imitation' as its leading critical term. The grave danger, however, with such a theory is that the original of the imitation will not be conceived of as something immaterial and ideal, a vital objective fact in the mind of the poet. Both theory and practice, in consequence, will tend towards realism, the imitation of the material rather than the spiritual. The old story of the contest of the painters is in point: Apelles, thinking that others were to prevail

over him through unjust means, caused his own representation of a horse, and those of the rest, to be shown to some horses, who neighed only at his painting. One also recalls the story of the birds and the fruit, and the painted curtain. At least by the time of Alexander the Great a realistic standard was not uncommon.

Nowhere would this drift towards an unideal objectivism be more pronounced than in the drama. Both subject matter and aim would foster the tendency to regard art as quite literally holding the mirror up to nature. Euripides, for instance, is more realistic than Aeschylus or Sophocles. Against such tendencies Plato's early philosophy and his artistic impulses would have led him to rebel. The so-called polemic of the tenth book may well be a severe arraignment by an idealist both of the theory and the practice of art in his day, pretending to be at times no more than the making of images of the external world. Such art can be concerned only with opinion, with the unreal, with mere reflections of a universe of particular men and things, with no attempt to reveal the type, the abiding fact underlying all apparent manifestations. Plato was objecting to the imagination of the realist and the materialist, of the 'naturalists' both in drama and in the plastic arts.

He would have included in his attack a movement not so typically Greek, but, if the Sophists had any great influence, one likely to leave its imprint upon the fine arts. For the ideal of Protagoras would easily have led to a theory of subjective art. The highest Greek standard of objectivity—and this is Plato's standard—would have insisted that an imitation is good in so far as it not only chooses the highest object, but also renders the most accurate copy of this object. Realists had been falsely imaginative in their choice of objects. In turn their copies are condemned as fanciful, for poets and painters, and those other artists, the Sophists, allow a personal element to come in, which distorts their vision, thereby rendering the copy inaccurate. The ripple on the surface of the water spoils the reflection. Plato's discussion of phantasy in fine art is his answer to the contention that it is the function of art to reflect the world as it is peculiarly colored by the personality of the artist. Such an artist belonged to the ranks of Protagoras and the other Sophists; he had not yet caught a vision of a world of ideas above and beyond that of particular impressions. He could never be taught by Diotima.

That Plato saw such a significant relation between the doctrine of relativity and a theory of phantasies, causing him to belittle

the function of particular impressions in art as in psychology, is confirmed by a passage in the *Theaetetus*:

For if truth is only sensation, and no man can discern another's feelings better than he, or has any superior right to determine whether his phantasies and opinions are true or false, but each . . . is to himself the sole judge, and everything that he judges is true, why, my friend, should Protagoras be preferred to the place of wisdom and instruction, and deserve to be well paid, and we poor ignoramuses have to go to him, if each one is the measure of his own wisdom. The attempt to supervise or refute the notions⁴⁴ or opinions of others would be a tedious and enormous piece of folly, if to each man his own are right.⁴⁵

It is unfortunate that, just as the term 'imagination' was in Plato's mind bound up with a theory of realistic art, so 'phantasy' should have been connected with a false standard of subjectivity. The necessity for attacking false standards meant also the attacking of the terms through which they were expressed. If the copying of the world of phenomena could be thought of as an act of 'imagination,' and if the relativists were accustomed to speak of the reproducing of objects from one's own point of view as the function of 'phantasy,' then Plato must attack 'imagination' and 'phantasy' as so conceived. If these were the familiar associations of the two terms, it is not unnatural that Plato should have regarded the words as conventional symbols of most unideal activities.

This view a study of the *Sophist* tends to support, for both in method and aim it is complementary to *Republic X*. The ostensible purpose of the latter, we have seen, was to attack Homer and his fellows; but the real aim was, rather, a criticism of false art, and a severe arraignment of the Eleatic theory, especially in its application to the fine arts. Similarly, the ostensible aim in the *Sophist* is to corner 'that clever manipulator of words,' always regarded by Plato as a bad artist, and to assign him to his proper place. There is, however, a second purpose which brings the *Sophist* in line with *Republic X*: a criticism of the Parmenidean doctrine because of its failure to catch the Sophist, i. e. to account for his activity and to answer his arguments. Just as the absolute rejection of poetry, the logical result of the application of the Eleatic theory, constituted a *reductio ad absurdum* of that doctrine, so the inability of this theory to corner the Sophist again indicates its one-sidedness. An adequate

⁴⁴ Literally, *phantasias*.

⁴⁵ 161 D, E; Jowett, 4. 217.

philosophical system must explain the activity of poet and Sophist as well as of philosopher and statesman.

The fact that the objects of attack are regarded as artists of similar kind affords additional basis for belief that the animadversions upon the Sophist supplement the criticisms of poet and painter. All are regarded as imitators who deal, not with ideas, but only with images, reflections, imitations thrice removed from their source. They are concerned, not with things as they are, but as they appear; not with knowledge, but with 'conjectural or apparent knowledge.'⁴⁶ Just as the artist, without being either carpenter or cobbler, proposed to give adequate copies of the handicraft of both,⁴⁷ so the Sophist deals in 'an imitative art of reasoning.'⁴⁸ 'Is it not possible to enchant the hearts of young men by words poured through their ears, when they are still at a distance from the truth of facts?'⁴⁹ The same charge is brought against poet and Sophist: they are corrupting youth through phantasies; they are proclaiming the reality of material objects and subjective impressions.

The Eleatic Stranger, the critic of the Dialogue, in keeping with his formal plan, proposes

as soon as possible to divide the image-making art [*εἰδωλοποικὴν*], and go down into the net, and, if the Sophist does not run away from us, to seize him according to orders and deliver him over to reason, who is the lord of the hunt, and proclaim the capture of him; and if he creeps into the recesses of the imitative art,⁵⁰ and secretes himself in one of them, to divide again and follow him up until in some subsection of imitation he is caught.⁵¹

The resulting division of imitative art suggests interesting comparisons with the less formal discussion of creative art in the *Republic*.

One is the art of likeness-making [*εἰκαστικὴν*]; generally a likeness of anything is made by producing a copy which is executed according to the proportions of the original, similar in length and breadth and depth, each thing receiving also its appropriate colour.⁵²

⁴⁶ 233 C; Jowett, 4. 360.

⁴⁷ *Repub.*, 601 A; Jowett, 3. 314.

⁴⁸ A free rendering; see 234 C.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *εἰδωλοποικὴν* and *μιμητικὴν* are clearly synonymous.

⁵¹ 235 B, C; Jowett, 4. 362.

⁵² 235 D.

This part of the imitative art which is concerned with making such an image (*εἰκόνα*) is called 'imaginative' (*εἰκαστικήν*).⁵³

But this is not always the aim of imitation.

In works either of sculpture or of painting which are of any magnitude, there is a certain degree of deception: for if artists were to give the true proportions of their fair works, the upper part, which is farther off, would appear to be out of proportion in comparison with the lower, which is nearer; and so they give up the truth in their images and make only the proportions which appear to be beautiful, disregarding the real ones.⁵⁴

And what shall we call those resemblances of the beautiful, which appear such owing to the unfavorable position of the spectator, whereas if a person had the power of getting a correct view of works of such magnitude, they would appear not even like that to which they profess to be like? May we not call these 'appearances,'⁵⁵ since they appear only and are not really like? . . . There is a great deal of this kind of thing in painting, and in all imitation. . . .

And may we not fairly call the sort of art which produces an appearance [*φάντασμα*] and not an image [*εἰκόνα*], phantastic art [*φανταστικήν*]? . . .

These then are the two kinds of image-making . . . the art of making likenesses [imaginative, *εἰκαστικήν*], and phantastic [*φανταστικήν*] or the art of making appearances.⁵⁶

The distinction of *Republic X* has been elaborated for the purpose of classifying the Sophist, but it still has reference to the fine arts. The division made in the *Republic* was no passing whim; it constituted the first great distinction between 'fancy' and 'imagination.' There is, however, a vital difference between the two discussions. In the *Republic* painting, sculpture, and dramatic poetry—the fine arts in general—seemingly came under the condemnation of being *both* imaginative and phantastic. It is noteworthy that in the *Sophist* only the plastic arts are censured as works of phantasy. (It must be remembered, however, that in the *Republic* painting was the specific example of phantasy.) The Eleatic Stranger is asking whether the particular artist under examination, the Sophist, is to be censured for being imaginative *or* phantastic. He wishes to know to what degree of falsehood this impostor has descended.

⁵³ 236 B.

⁵⁴ 236 A; Jowett, 4. 363.

⁵⁵ *φάντασμα*; the singular is used throughout.

⁵⁶ 236 B, C. The spelling 'phantastic' is kept throughout to correspond to 'phantasy.'

In the former dialogue there was at least the implication of such a function as the right imaging of right objects; the way was open to a constructive theory of imagination in terms of which one might have had a conception of music similar to that later enunciated in the *Laws*.⁵⁷ This music, or poetry of the highest sort, would be the adequate image or expression of universal truth. But, having implied that there was a true imagination, he seemingly regarded the function of 'appearance-making,' i. e. 'phantasy,' as comprehending all lower types of 'imagination.' If one 'fancies,' one deals with material images. Henceforth Plato describes the less ideal kinds of art as 'phantastic.' He is asking now whether this Sophist is to be regarded as an artist like the musician, who is concerned with images of ideas, or like the naturalistic painter, who deals not only with material objects, but with mere semblances, impressions, depending upon his varying moods.

[But] if we say to him that he professes an art of making appearances [*φανταστικήν*], he will grapple with us and retort our argument upon ourselves; and when we call him an image-maker [*εἰδωλοποικόν*, the inclusive term] he will say, 'Pray what do you mean at all by an image?' . . .

We shall doubtless tell him of the images which are reflected in water or in mirrors;⁵⁸ also of sculptures, pictures, and other duplicates. . . .

When you tell him of something existing in a mirror, or in sculpture, and address him as though he had eyes, he will laugh you to scorn, and will pretend that he knows nothing of mirrors and streams, or of sight at all; he will say that he is asking about an idea.⁵⁹ . . . Of course he will say that we are contradicting ourselves when we hazard the assertion that falsehood exists in opinion and in words; for in maintaining this, we are compelled over and over again to assert being of not-being, which we admitted just now to be an utter impossibility.⁶⁰

Plato's early sympathy with Parmenides had caused him to assert the unreality of the material and contingent, the 'not-being of not-being.' Now in a later dialogue he pictures the Sophist, accused of dealing in phantasies (which for the Eleatic could have no existence), insisting that his Eleatic critic shall be consistent, and

⁵⁷ *Laws*, 2. 655; Jowett, 5. 33: 'Let us say that the figures and melodies which are expressive of virtue of soul or body, or of images of virtue, are without exception good, and those which are expressive of vice are the reverse of good.'

⁵⁸ The 'mirrors' and 'water' of *Republic VI* are still kept as types of the deceptive 'phantasy' of plastic art.

⁵⁹ 239 D, 240 A; Jowett, 4. 368.

⁶⁰ 241 A, B; Jowett, 4. 370.

pointing out that he cannot call either true or false that the existence of which he had already denied. In order to judge phantasies the Eleatic must modify his *prima philosophia*. If Plato himself was to have a satisfactory philosophy, it must take into account the image-making of Sophist and painter. 'In self-defense I must test the philosophy of my father Parmenides, and try to prove by main force that not-being is,'⁶¹ i. e. that the phenomenal world is a vital reality which his philosophy must seek to explain. Naturally, Plato's 'Critique of Pure Being' ends in a modification of the older doctrine of ideas: 'If not-being has no part in the proposition, then all things must be true; but if not-being has a part, then false opinion and false speech are possible, for to think or to say what is not—is falsehood, which thus arises in the region of thought and in speech.'⁶²

The Sophist had already been accused of phantasy, and now of false opinion and speech. Phantasy, opinion, discourse: these three come more and more to be associated in the mind of Plato. He is nearer to a positive theory. The final rejection of the old monism makes possible definite assertions concerning powers hitherto defined only in negative terms. Plato's poetic impulse would have taught him that the phantasy, the faculty of impressions, the power enabling man to be in contact with the sensible world, was also the power of expression, essential alike to poet and Sophist, painter and philosopher.

In consequence, throughout the *Sophist* there is a very vital relation between phantasy, and the discussions of language and opinion,⁶³ with the seeming digressions concerning predication. It is not by chance that Plato represents the Sophist as insisting 'that language and opinion are of the non-partaking class' (do not participate in reality); and at the same time as fighting to the death 'against the existence of the image-making and phantastic art, in which we have placed him.'⁶⁴ These, for Plato, are aspects of the same problem. He is insisting that if the Sophist is to be answered,—if we are to be able to talk about false and true predication,—there must first be a sufficient modification of the old theory of ideas to establish the 'being,' the reality, of error in thought, opinion, and speech, in all the manifestations of phan-

⁶¹ 241 D.

⁶² 260 C; Jowett, 4. 395.

⁶³ Jowett, 4. 397 ff.

⁶⁴ 260 D; Jowett, 4. 396.

tasy as the power of receiving and giving expression to one's impressions. After an appeal directly to experience he concludes that thought, opinion, and phantasy do exist in our minds both as true and false.⁶⁵ And thought, opinion, phantasy, and speech are but differing aspects of the same thing. 'When opinion is presented, not simply, [i. e. not in a simple proposition] but in some form of sense, would you not call it phantasy?'⁶⁶

The deceptiveness of the Sophist arises from his wrong mental state: his false opinion issues in false speech, just as the false opinion of the painter issues in false phantasy. It is not, however, this parallel which makes the *Sophist* especially significant for the student of the fine arts, but, rather, that Plato ceases to regard the nature of the object as the one criterion either of fine art or of oral discourse. Henceforth he is also interested in mental processes; and not alone in the thought concerned with ideas, but also in the thought which, bound up with sense and opinion, issues in phantasies, opinions which have taken sensible shape. This world of material objects, which results in impressions and demands representation in similar terms, has found its place both in philosophy and in the theory of fine art. This recognition of phantasy becomes indicative of its importance in the most ideal thought and the highest creative art. Not in the *Sophist*, however, for Plato is primarily interested in defining the term and describing the function in the lower processes of thought and expression that he may the more completely catch and classify the Sophist. Having proved the reality of the Sophist's phantasies, he is ready to proceed to a new classification.

Str. You may remember that all art was originally divided by us into creative [*ποιητικήν*] and acquisitive [*κτητικήν*].

And the Sophist was flitting before us in the acquisitive class, in the subdivisions of hunting, contests, merchandise, and the like.

But now that the imitative art has enclosed him, it is clear that we must begin by dividing the art of creation; for imitation is a kind of creation—of images, however, and not of real things.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ 263 A-D; Jowett, 4. 399-400.

⁶⁶ 264 A.

⁶⁷ 265 A, B; Jowett, 4. 401-402.

Having thus brought 'imitation' or 'image-making' (εἰδωλοποι-
κὴν) under the general term 'creative art' (τὴν ποιητικὴν τέχνην),
he at once distinguishes between two kinds of creation, the
human and the divine. The latter in turn he divides: there is the
divine creative activity, properly so-called, the making of the uni-
verse; and then there is the making of images corresponding to the
elements of the universe. These are the phantasms (φαντάσματα)
'which spring up of themselves in sleep or by day, such as a shadow
when darkness arises in a fire, or the reflection which is produced
when the light in bright and smooth objects meets on their surface
with an external light, and creates a perception the opposite of our
ordinary sight.'⁶⁸ These as well as the other are the work of divine
creation.

Similarly there are two branches of human creative art:

Do we not make one house by the art of building, and another by the
art of drawing, which is a sort of dream for those who are awake.⁶⁹

And other products of human creation are also twofold and go in pairs;
there is the thing, with which the art of making the thing is concerned,
and the image, with which imitation is concerned.⁷⁰

Another activity has been added to the three already described
in *Republic X*: besides the proper creative function of God, there
is now recognized a capacity for creating phantasms in the minds
of men in dreams and waking visions. This, we shall see, is regarded
as 'divine phantasy,' or 'divine phantastic imitation.' The two
human capacities symbolized in the making of the bed by the
carpenter, and the painting of the bed by the artist, have merely
been carried over into the new scheme, the one as creation proper
on the part of men, the other as imitation or image-making in the
inclusive sense. After the careful distinction between the two kinds
of imitation or image-making, the imaginative and the phantastic,
one might anticipate a classification involving six, instead of four,
divisions, having two kinds of divine and two kinds of human imi-
tation. Again Plato seems content to regard 'phantasy' or 'phan-
tastic imitation' as the inclusive term, standing in the field of divine
activity as well as in the human for image-making in general.
Whether he had in mind any 'imaginative' imitation on the part of

⁶⁸ 266 B, C; Jowett, 4. 403.

⁶⁹ 266 C.

⁷⁰ 266 D

God analogous to human imitation through faithful images we have no means of knowing. It is to be noted, however, that the divine activity which he is to describe, like the art of the Sophist, is the creation of effects not necessarily corresponding to an external reality. At any rate, Plato does not need the distinction here: he glances at it casually. 'And let us not forget that of the imitative class the one part was to have been likeness-making [*τὸ εἰκαστικόν*] and the other phantastic [*τὸ φανταστικόν*].'⁷¹ He then proceeds to a further division of the latter.

By placing the Sophist in the category of imitators by means of phantasies he again classifies him with the painter and the poet of the impressionistic type. In the choice of drawing as the type of all 'phantastic' art he has in mind an attack directed only at false realism and subjectivism. He is not linking the Sophist with those artists like the true musicians who aim to create images of beautiful ideas; but is rather insisting that he stands in the same relation to speculative thought that the impressionistic artist does to the highest creative art. Just as the true artist and the true philosopher were one for Plato—and he aimed in his own practice to illustrate this—so false artist and false thinker came under the same condemnation. No thinker has ever established a closer relation between poetry and philosophy. For Plato they were aiming at the same objects and were to be judged by the same laws. Hence the significance for the student of poetics of the classification of the Sophist.

Having placed him among imitative artists dealing with phantasies, Plato subdivides: 'There is one kind [of phantastic art] which is produced by an instrument, and another in which the creator of the appearance [*τὸ φάντασμα*] is himself the instrument,' as in acting.⁷² 'As for the other division, we are weary and will give that up, leaving to some one else the duty of giving it a suitable name.'⁷³ He means, of course, the plastic arts in general of the unideal, impressionistic type. He hurries to a further subdivision: this creating of impressions without the aid of instruments, i. e. acting, may be with or without knowledge of that which is to be imitated. Thus mimics may imitate with knowledge of the person's figure and habits; or entirely without such knowledge.⁷⁴ Or one

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; Jowett, 4. 404.

⁷² 267 A.

⁷³ 267 A. B.

⁷⁴ 267 B; Jowett, 4. 405.

may endeavor to imitate virtue, i.e. produce the impression of being virtuous, with true knowledge of virtue, or with only an unsafe opinion concerning it. 'For the sake of distinctness I will make bold to call the imitation which coexists with opinion [*doxo-imitative*, *δοξομιμητικήν*]; that which coexists with science, a scientific or learned imitation [*ιστορικήν*].'⁷⁵ In turn, disregarding the latter class of which the well-informed actor would be a representative, he assumes that the former includes the Sophist, thus again implying the comparison with other bad artists.

This creator of impressions without use of instrument, and without adequate knowledge of the original, may be either simple and serious, or dissembling and ironical. In turn, the latter, who again is the Sophist, may indulge in long or short speeches. The former is the haranguer as opposed to the true statesman and orator; the latter is the Sophist as opposed to the philosopher.⁷⁶

So the Sophist is at last cornered; but the significant fact is not that he has been placed in a particular category, but that he has been regarded as an artist like the painter and sculptor. This being so, we have the key to Plato's classification and theory of criticism of the fine arts. His method, indeed, justifies the assumption that what is true for the Sophist, a bad artist in dialectic, is equally true for his brother artist in poetry. For Plato the naturalistic painter is a Sophist; and the latter is a kind of painter of words. It is obvious, moreover, that this Sophist is also far removed from the king and from the truth. The true philosopher and the Sophist are at extremes. Then by analogy, if Sophist and bad artist are in the same category, one should be able to make other significant deductions:

(1) The highest kind of creative activity is that whereby God made the universe according to a divine pattern. This function receives its most complete exposition in Plato's theology, especially in the myth of the *Timaeus*, where ideas are represented as existing in their purity only in the mind of God. According to the image of these he created the universe. This highest creative activity has no counterpart in acquisitive activity.

(2) The second type of creation ascribed to God is the production of phantasms in our dreams and visions. This is comparable, in the acquisitive activity, to the *vônous* of *Republic VI*. We must

⁷⁵ 267^aD, E; Jowett, *ibid*.

⁷⁶ 268

remember, however, that this creation of phantasms is an activity of God, not of man. It results in the inspiration of poet and prophet. This fury of the inspired madman—receiving these phantasms from God through a power of phantasy of his own—is analogous to that dialectic which leads to the contemplation of Ideas: only in dialectic there is a striving to attain the idea, while in the operation of divine phantasy (God's creative activity) man is a passive recipient of impressions from above. It is significant, too, that Plato's inspired poets, like Dante, profess an inability to give adequate expression to their visions. They are true to type: the world of *vóησις* is for Plato as for any mystic beyond human imagination. God alone is capable of its expression.

(3) The highest creative function of man, described as the making of things themselves, and typified in *Republic VI* in the making of the bed, would seem to correspond to *διάνοια* in the processes of knowledge. And just as man in the field of acquisition (*κτητικὴν*), the attainment of knowledge, employed hypothetical images, as in mathematics, so in creative art he uses similar images for its expression. This is to say that the highest human creation involves an act of imagination. It is true that Plato nowhere explicitly recognizes this use of images in his discussion of creative art; and it is also true that save for a casual reference the distinction between imaginative and phantastic imitation is dismissed in this portion of the *Sophist*. But there is reason to believe that Plato would have us keep the distinction in mind; and that just as 'phantasy' and 'phantastic imitation' comprehended the lower forms of imagination, so 'imagination' of a higher type was supposed to participate in the highest creative functions, the ideal aspects of the art of imitation. The carpenter, says Plato, creates the bed in the image of an idea, just as God creates the universe according to a divine pattern. The meaning will perhaps be clearer if we think of this carpenter as an architect aiming to express an immaterial ideal. In this sense the Parthenon or a cathedral is the image or embodiment of a religious conception, the likeness of a spiritual ideal; and the artist is expressing his ideal through the same power of imagination of which the scientist makes use in his schematic representations. There is this difference, that the one is an aid to the attainment of ideas, the other to their expression. Imagination both in philosophy and poetry, in the science of thought, and in the art of expression, is the connecting link between

the real and the ideal, between the realm of ideas and that of material objects.

It is imagination in this more comprehensive sense which Plato has in mind in the *Laws* where he calls music not only imitative but imaginative (εἰκαστική).⁷⁷ All art is a process of making images; but this imitation is not to be judged by pleasure and false opinion,⁷⁸ but rather by the ideality of the object and the faithfulness of the image. In this view all art is imitative; and good art is not only imitative of right objects, but is imaginative rather than impressionistic and phantastic. In this sense 'imaginative' is associated with the higher aspects of representative art, 'phantastic' only with the lower.

(4) 'Phantastic imitation' seems to be the creative activity corresponding to the fourth acquisitive power, εἰκασία; the one is the process of making shadows as the other is the process of knowing by means of shadows. The 'phantastic' imitator has no higher concern than the production of impressions of material objects, just as the thinker who dwells in εἰκασία has no loftier conception of knowledge than the receiving of impressions. Each is concerned with opinion rather than knowledge, with things rather than ideas, with the changing rather than the absolute and eternal. The materialistic artist and the Sophist are both imitators of a distinctly inferior type, dwelling not only in a realm of images, shadows, but in a universe of untrustworthy impressions. Both are primarily interested in gazing at the shadows on the walls of the cave. Such art is to be distinguished from that imaginative imitation of a higher sort. It is the lowest kind of imaging with which the phantasy is concerned.

(5) Plato is no longer content to banish the Sophist and the naturalistic painter from the ideal state. They are to be judged not only by the idealistic standard, but also by the standards which their own practice suggests. If the artist imitates material reality, he must be judged according to his knowledge of what he imitates and his attitude towards his subject. That imitator is most to be censured who knows least about the reality which he pretends to represent, and who is ironical rather than simple and direct in his presentation. Judged by this standard, Plato's Sophist is worthy of most censure,—and so, we might add, is the painter who with

⁷⁷ 2. 668; Jowett, 5. 47.

⁷⁸ 2. 667 E.

little knowledge of nature insincerely describes on the canvas the impression created in his own mind, trying in turn to stimulate a similar impression in the mind of another. Or Plato might have had in mind that 'phantastic' painter of words who, in love with his own half ironical, half-serious conception, insists on giving it artistic expression in the popular lecture or treatise. The comprehensiveness of Plato's method of criticism would bring them under the same condemnation with the cheap public orator, the descriptive poet, and perhaps more than one modern dramatist. Indeed, a modern application of his method of criticism would result in some interesting comparisons.

(6) It would also unite at the other extreme the statesman and the dialectician as having chosen, according to this classification, the highest aims and means. Thus the dialectician as a kind of creator would be called a creator of ideas, not of things or impressions, with knowledge of the original, simply and directly, using short rather than long speeches.

In such terms Plato would describe himself as the creator of the Dialogues, thus indicating his use of ideal means, both of acquiring knowledge and of expression, as opposed to the quite unideal science and art of the great popular philosophers of the day. In the same way the ideal statesman of the *Republic* would be the opposite of the public haranguer, the natural political product of the Sophistical schools. Plato's dialectician and statesman would be imaginative men, concerned with the contemplation and expression of the ideal, rather than creators of impressions. These would be both thinkers and creators in the realm of *διάνοια*; for both dialogue and state are the result of *κρητικήν* and *ποιητικήν*, philosophy and poetry, thought and expression. The *Republic* is a perfect embodiment of Plato's conception of *διάνοια* as a kind of thought which makes use of images, and an imaginative imitation comparable to the creative faculty making use of images. By the use of hypothetical images we attain the idea of the perfect state; by means of similar images a dialogue is created, the image of the ideal which the author has in mind. The state which Plato imagines is the imitation of that ideal state which exists in the mind of philosopher and statesman alike. Thus the censure of Sophist and painter, studied in the light of the Platonic method of criticism, leads to a constructive theory of imagination as a creative power,

and justifies us in calling the *Republic* 'imaginative' in Plato's sense in both conception and execution.

(7) It is noteworthy that the dramatist is not specifically mentioned as a dealer in phantasies. It is difficult to think of an art essentially so objective as peculiarly liable to the charge of subjectivity. One is inclined to say that Plato felt that drama was on a higher plane than impressionistic painting and sophistry. It is essentially imaginative rather than phantastic.⁷⁹

We are prone, then, to ask what in Plato's art takes the place of the drama so severely arraigned in the *Republic*. A bad play, according to the scheme of the *Sophist*, would be a copy of the acts of individuals as they appear to be, with no universal insight into character, and by means of ironical speeches. This is, of course, 'phantastic imitation.' What would constitute in drama imitation of the higher sort? It would be an imitation of men and women, not as they seem to be, but as they actually are, not as particular persons, but as ideals. The artist must have adequate knowledge of human nature; and express his ideals simply and directly. Plato's imaginative dramatist could hardly have been concerned with characters who possessed tragic flaws, or with situations to which the hero was unequal. His universal type, even in tragedy, would sum up the highest qualities of dialectician, statesman, and poet. The suffering, quite undeserved, would result in admiration of the man—who would be no particular individual, but the incarnation of the poet's ideal. Plato would probably have regarded *Prometheus Bound* as better drama than *Oedipus Rex*. He would also, I think, point to his own Dialogues which deal with the trial and death of Socrates as examples of truly imaginative drama, expressions of universal truth through images of flesh and blood. His Socrates is not the historical character, but the incarnation of Plato's ideal of the good man, the last events in whose life furnish the material for perfect tragedy.

Such is Plato's view of imagination in the service of reason, necessary both in thought and its artistic embodiment. Imagination aids reason in arriving at universal ideas, and in turn in giving to them concrete expression. As yet, however, there is no theory comparable to that notion of Wordsworth that imagination is reason in her most exalted mood. That was to come centuries later.

⁷⁹ He may, however, regard drama as subjective in *Rep. X* (602 D).

The *Philebus* is a continuation of Plato's critical philosophy, especially in its relation to ethics. The discussion of the function of opinion, already closely associated with phantasy, becomes the basis of a science of ethics. Socrates is anxious to show that opinion springs not alone from impressions of sense, but from sense and memory combined. He appeals to experience: one asks oneself,

'What is that which appears [*φανταζόμενον*] to be standing by the rock under the tree?' . . . To which he may guess the right answer, saying as if in a whisper to himself⁸⁰—'It is a man.' . . . Or again, he may be misled, and then he will say—'No, it is a figure made by the shepherds.' . . . And if he has a companion, he repeats his thought to him in articulate sounds, and what was before an opinion, has now become a proposition.⁸¹

Obviously Plato has in mind the discussion in the *Sophist* of right and wrong predication, and the common bond uniting thought, opinion, and phantasy (i.e. opinion expressed in some form of sense). It is also noteworthy that he thinks of 'phantasy' in two ways: 'that which appears' is 'phantasy,' and the expression of an opinion would also constitute a 'phantasy.' In this process of getting and expressing opinions he wishes to show how important is the rôle of memory. 'Memory and perception meet, and they and their attendant feelings seem to me almost to write down words in the soul, and when the inscribing feeling writes truly, then true opinion and true propositions which are the expressions of opinion, come into our souls—but when the scribe within us writes falsely, the result is false.'⁸² Such is his account of the memory.

I must bespeak your favour also for another artist, who is busy at the same time in the chambers of the soul.

Who is he?

The painter, who, after the scribe has done his work, draws images in the soul of the things which he has described.

But when and how does he do this?

When a man, besides receiving from sight or some other senses certain opinions or statements, sees in his mind the images of the subjects of them;⁸³—is not this a very common mental phenomenon?

Certainly.

⁸⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 37. 'Thought is the conversation of the soul with herself.' Jowett, 4. 400.

⁸¹ 38 C, D; Jowett, 4. 609.

⁸² 39 A; Jowett, 4. 610.

⁸³ I. e., images of the original, not of the resultant impressions.

And the images answering to true opinions and words are true, and to false opinions and words false; are they not?⁸⁴

Plato is so far from his early contempt—or pretended contempt—for knowledge gained through the senses that he is actually at pains to describe the function of the reproductive imagination in its relation to perception, memory, and phantasy. First there is the simple sensation and the resulting impression, or simple phantasy. This the memory retains. In turn the connection established in the mind between the object of perception and the memory-image causes us to have true or false opinion, which when expressed constitutes a true or false phantasy. In these terms Plato first distinguished between the presentative and the reproductive imagination.

Of course, such an interpretation assumes that the relations established between thought, phantasy, and discourse are in the mind of Plato throughout the *Philebus*, that the psychology of the *Philebus* is a continuation of that of the *Sophist*. Then it follows that the faculty described as the painter is the phantasy in a new aspect, and not to be identified with the first simple impression. Plato is insisting that man gives shape to his opinions, that in the process of forming the simplest opinion he instinctively forms a mental image to aid him. Our opinion may very easily be false if our memory has played us false and has not adhered faithfully to the original impression. In consequence, our concrete representation of that opinion will be false: it will not square with the first phantasy. These phantasies or concrete embodiments of thought following sensation are liable to error. The pictures of the reproductive imagination are true or false according to the accuracy of the mental process preceding them.

Now, Plato says, we have opinions of the future also; and a similar power of phantasy to give shape to them. We give very definite shape to our hopes and fears. Because this is so, phantasy plays an essential part in regulating conduct. 'And the fancies of hope are also pictured in us; a man may often have a vision of a heap of gold, and pleasures ensuing, and in the picture there may be a likeness of himself mightily rejoicing over his good fortune.'⁸⁵ The good, he concludes, keep before them good images;

⁸⁴ 39 B, C.

⁸⁵ 40 A; Jowett, 4. 611.

while the bad have only ludicrous imitations of the true. Their images, the concrete embodiments of their false opinions, lead only to a pleasure 'about things which neither have nor have ever had any real existence'.⁸⁸ This power of phantasy, more intimately than ever bound up with the problem of knowledge, becomes the means by which conduct is regulated. To know oneself, from one point of view, is to know the state of one's phantasies as the various shapes taken by our feelings in determining our acts: our hopes, fears, and desires. This conception of the rôle of imagination, the source of Aristotelian and Stoic views, was to pervade classical and mediaeval ethics.

This view of the ethical imagination in the *Philebus* constitutes an introduction to an important discussion in the *Timaeus*. The student of Plato's conception of fine art invariably remarks as an essential part of that theory a belief in poetic inspiration; and he will hardly be satisfied with an account of Plato's views of fancy and imagination which ignores the discourse of the inspired Socrates of the *Symposium* and the myth of the *Phaedrus*. Yet there is no explicit theory of fancy and imagination in either of these dialogues. If, however, the *Symposium* is an early work, we should expect only a contempt for phantasms. With the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus* it is different. They were presumably written at a time when Plato no longer condemned phantasies and images as unreal. It is hardly to be expected, however, that a recognition of phantasy as a power necessary to the knowledge of the material world would eventually lead to a theory of inspiration or enthusiasm or madness as states of imagination. While Plato comes more and more to recognize the necessary functions of phantasy, he seems to be getting farther away from that world of Immutable Ideas the contemplation of which would constitute inspiration or ecstasy or enthusiasm. Nowhere in his later critical dialogues, in which he developed a theory of phantasy in the service of reason, does he seem to have reached again the high ideal of the *Symposium* with its contempt for phantasms of the material world.

It is true that his notion of phantasy had come so close to *νόησις* that he had recognized that in the mental functioning immediately below intuition one could not think of the abstract save through images. This implicit theory of imaginative symbolism

⁸⁸ 40 D; Jowett, 4. 612.

just falls short of a doctrine of inspiration. However close phantasy and imagination are to the highest mental function, they are never for Plato identical with it; they are only means. Human imagination was tied to the laws of matter; and no theory of human image-making could lead to a theory of intuition of immaterial ideas. In Plato's dualism there was a gulf between spirit and matter over which a faculty concerned with the latter could not easily pass; there was a point, as in Dante's vision of Paradise,⁸⁷ beyond which human phantasy could not go. It could not of its own power result in intuition.

But inspiration implies, not so much an activity on the part of the individual, as a right condition of receptivity and a communication both of power and of vision by a higher Being. It does not even imply that the vision will be comprehended through our highest intellectual powers. The inspired man, from this point of view, is not necessarily the wisest. It is not essentially by means of the loftiest imagination that the vision is seen. So much ought to be premised concerning man's activity in the process of inspiration.

In turn, a doctrine of divine inspiration must start from the belief in a God who not only comprehends in his own person all objects worthy of contemplation, but has definitely ascribed to him a power and function through which these ideas, these worthy objects of vision, may be communicated to the favored being who is in fit condition to receive them. To such a doctrine the discussion in the *Sophist* of the creative function seems to point; and the fulfilment of that scheme, it is reasonable to think, one finds in the *Timaeus*.⁸⁸

Plato has by no means given up his fundamental dualism; mind and true opinion are essentially different.⁸⁹ Opinion, however, is no longer presumed to be false; its reality is recognized, and Plato is now interested in the laws which govern it.

⁸⁷ *Paradiso*, 33. 142: 'All' alta fantasia qui mancò possa.'

⁸⁸ This, of course, takes for granted that God is the source of the ideas; and the force of the interpretation about to be offered may seem to be weakened by the fact that so good an authority as Archer-Hind (*The Timaeus of Plato*, pp. 37 ff.) expressly denies that the 'demiourgos' is the creator of the Ideas. While explaining away the passage in *Rep. VI*, he has seemingly ignored the references in the *Sophist* to the divine creative function.

⁸⁹ 51 C, D, E; Jowett, 3. 471.

Every man may be said to share in true opinion, but mind is the attribute of the gods and of a very few men. Wherefore also we must acknowledge that there is one kind of being which is always the same, uncreated and indestructible, . . . invisible and imperceptible by any sense, and of which the contemplation is granted to intelligence [*νόησις*] only.⁹⁰ And there is another nature of the same name with it, and like to it, perceived by sense, created, always in motion . . . which is apprehended by opinion and sense.⁹¹

Plato has in mind the line of knowledge described in *Republic VI*, cut into two unequal portions called the invisible and the visible.

It is also noteworthy that he continues to think of the acquisition of knowledge as a process of seeing, which demands a complementary relation between light and power. The soul for him is like the eye, and the ordinary process of knowledge is described as a kind of vision wherein the light of the eye and a light from an external source combine to produce knowledge.⁹² The lower sort, true opinion, would for Plato naturally take the form of phantasms. These, the products of sensation, are the result of the perfect union of the internal and external powers.⁹³ This is the process of waking experience.

'But when night comes on and the external and kindred fire departs, then the stream of vision is cut off' [i.e. the ordinary processes of sense-experience no longer function] and the soul is said to sleep. 'But where the greater motions still remain, of whatever nature and in whatever locality, they engender corresponding visions in dreams, which are remembered by us when we are awake and in the external world.'⁹⁴ Then he adds: 'And now there is no longer any difficulty in understanding the creation of images in mirrors and all smooth and bright surfaces.'⁹⁵ Of course, the explanation is that we confuse the internal impression and the external source. Thus right appears left, and left right.

⁹⁰ *I. e.*, to the gods and to a very few men.

⁹¹ 51 E, 52 A; Jowett, 3. 472.

⁹² See 45; Jowett, 3. 464-5.

⁹³ 45 D, E.

⁹⁴ *τοιαῦτα καὶ τοσαῦτα παρέσχοντο ἀφομοιωθέντα ἐντός ἑξω τε ἐγερεθείσιν ἀπομνημονεύμενα φαντάσματα*. Archer-Hind (*op. cit.*, p. 159) translates: 'according to their nature and the places where they remain, they engender visions corresponding in kind and in number; which are images within us, and when we are awake are remembered as outside us.' This brings out the contrast between ἐντός and ἑξω.

⁹⁵ 46 A; Jowett, 3. 465.

Dreams then 'are the result of motions which are not thoroughly calmed down, whereby semblances of external things are presented to the mind from within.'⁹⁶ These dream-phantasies we are capable of remembering; but there is the danger that we may remember them as though they were the results of waking consciousness. Then we would be regarding the phantasy presented in sleep not as a mental picture but as an external reality. Such is the problem suggested. The more important aspects of the theory, however, in its bearing upon our study are these: (1) dreaming is regarded as an affair of the lower soul, (2) dreams give rise to phantasies rather than to images of external reality, and (3) these dream-phantasies can be remembered.

We must also remember that in the *Philebus* Plato had already carefully noted the importance of phantasies in moral conduct. This psychology of conduct the *Timaeus* supplements. In the lower part of the body, we are told, God placed those desires and organs necessary for sustenance.⁹⁷ But 'knowing that this lower principle of man would not comprehend reason, and even if attaining to some degree of perception, would never naturally care for rational notions, but that it would be led away by [images, εἰδώλων] and [phantasms, φαντασμάτων] night and day,—to be a remedy to this, God combined with it the liver, and placed it in the house of the lower nature, contriving that it should be solid and smooth, and bright and sweet, . . . in order that the power of thought, which proceeds from the mind, might be reflected as in a mirror which receives likenesses of objects and gives back images of them to the sight.'⁹⁸ Plato means that the purpose of God in thus placing in the lower soul—concerned with the appetites and passions—a power like a mirror was to constitute a direct check upon the evil images and phantasms which result in immoral conduct. It is a second kind of phantasy capable of producing images of the ideal objects of contemplation of the higher soul. These supplement, and at times supplant, the products of the normal phantasy, which as a means to conduct frames images of material objects. Thus it strikes terror into the natural desires.

And the converse happens when some gentle inspiration of the understanding pictures [phantasms] of an opposite character, . . . [rendering]

⁹⁶ Archer-Hind, *op. cit.*, p. 158 n.

⁹⁷ 70 E; Jowett, 3. 492.

⁹⁸ 71 A, B; Jowett, 3. 492-3. Alterations in quotations are enclosed in square brackets, unless otherwise acknowledged.

the portion of the soul which resides about the liver happy and joyful, enabling it to pass the night in peace, and to practice divination in sleep, inasmuch as it has no share in mind and reason. For the authors of our being . . . that they might correct our inferior parts and make them to attain a measure of truth, placed in the liver the seat of divination. And herein is a proof that God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man. No man, when in his wits, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled in sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession. And he who would understand what he remembers to have said, whether in a dream or when he is awake, by the prophetic and inspired nature, or would determine by reason the meaning of the apparitions [φαντάσματα] which he has seen, and what indications they afford to this man or that of past, present, or future good and evil, must first recover his wits. But, while he continues demented, he cannot judge of the visions [φαντασιῶς] which he sees or the words which he utters.⁹⁹

This, he adds, is the work of the interpreter, who is thus an expositor of 'dark sayings and visions' (φαντάσματα).

It is at the outset apparent that this second function of phantasy has to do not only with dreams but also with the waking states of madness and delirium. These phantasies of dreams, insanity, and fever are not to be explained merely in terms of psychology. They may be 'the gentle inspiration of the understanding.' They are, Plato says, the impressions 'of the power of thought which proceeds from the mind'; and are thus the reflections in the lower nature of the truths arrived at by the higher, not only serving to correct our impulses, but enabling one through that sensible nature to have a phantasy, a personal experience in terms of the senses, of the world of absolute and immaterial reality. For Plato knew that his expert in dialectic was not the highest type of the man of vision: God has given a power of divination not to the wisdom but to the foolishness of man. The capacity of the dreamer and the inspired prophet for receiving and uttering phantasies is thus a higher power than the reasoning of the philosopher and the statesman.

We may say that the vision comes directly from God, or merely that it is a gentle inspiration, or a power of thought, proceeding from the higher soul—it makes little difference. Mind has always been spoken of as the attribute of gods and a very few men. Hence

⁹⁹ 71 C-72 B; Jowett, 3. 493-4.

this new power of phantasy—of implanting in the appetitive and passionate part of man's nature these phantasms which reflect a world of ideas—is manifestly the second kind of divine creative activity described in the *Sophist*. In the phantasies of the dreamer and the seer are to be seen the results of that creative activity of God which is a kind of imitation, and is specifically *φανταστική*.

Here a divine power of creating impressions acts through a comparable and complementary human function in man's lower nature. Thus it is that the highest power of vision, the gift of insight, is given not to the wise, but to the simple whose minds have become fit receptacles for these divinely communicated ideas. This object of vision is not the abstraction of discursive thought, or even the image of an idea; but the idea itself made intelligible through its perfect embodiment, its expression in sensible terms. It is a concrete, individual thing of beauty, an artistic product for the inner eye, a perfect object of vision.¹⁰⁰

In its bearing upon both intellectual and moral life it is thus higher than any activity of discursive thought. Not only does it transcend all other means of regulating conduct by its use of a higher kind of phantasm; but in the attainment of truth it no longer needs the symbolic images so important in *διάνοια*. Yet in philosophy, in art, and in morality, Plato would rise to the highest ideal through the lowest means: the phantasms of the seer and the prophet result from the proper informing of the lower nature, by which one feels, desires, senses, and acts. It is in this part of the soul that man's capacity both for impression and expression lies. The inner eye as well as the outer must have a concrete object of vision; and this concrete object demands the functioning of the lower, sensible soul. So it is that Plato comes to regard this power of phantasy—once accused of being wholly unideal—as the very faculty which, rightly informed by light from above, results in vision higher than reason can attain. Reason can only interpret that high phantastic vision.

Phantasy in this view, having transcended the understanding, realizes the highest function of mind in the realm of intelligence (*νόησις*), and in the truest sense—but in a sense quite different from that of Wordsworth—is reason in her most exalted mood. Just as the view of the *Philebus* was the source of the conceptions of Aristotle and the Stoics of the function of imagination in moral

¹⁰⁰ See Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

conduct, so the view of the *Timaeus* was the most significant source of certain Neoplatonic utterances.

Although Lutoslawski places the *Phaedrus* immediately after the *Republic*, we shall consider it at this point after the *Timaeus*. It contains no explicit theory of *φαντασία*, but there is implicit in it a view which becomes apparent only after an examination of the *Philebus* and *Timaeus*. It also contains many conceptions typical of the *Republic*. The myth, for instance, is perhaps the best concrete expression of Plato's dualism in psychology. The two steeds of the soul are, however, hardly analogous to the two parts of the line in *Republic VI*, or to any portions of the Myth of the Cave. The contrast of reason and impulse, with full recognition of the essential nature of the latter, brings the *Phaedrus* closer to the later Dialogues. Quite naturally Plato insists that the lower nature drags the soul down, while the higher struggles upward for true knowledge. And just as the lower soul seeks material objects of vision, so the ideal of contemplation of the higher is the 'colorless, intangible essence, visible only to mind [*νοῦς*] who is the pilot of the soul.'¹⁰¹ This is clearly the state of *νόησις* described in *Republic VI*. It is significant, however, that Plato adds, 'Such is the life of the gods'; and, he might have added, of the most Godlike men. He immediately describes human activity as a process of endless striving towards this goal, the charioteers—even the best—being so troubled by the horses that it is with difficulty that they behold true Being. A second class of men alternately rise to a vision of reality and then sink again, 'because of the violence of the horses.' The third class of charioteers are so mastered by their unruly steeds that their wings are broken, and, not having seen reality, they turn to opinion.

It is natural to seek to identify the activities described here with the three types of knowledge of *Republic VI*: *διάνοια*, *πίστις*, and *εἰκασία*. There is, however, no true correspondence: Plato here is not thinking of the degrees of ideality in the objects of contemplation, but rather of the proper restraint and regulation of impulse as a means to vision. As myths of vision these of the *Phaedrus* and of the *Timaeus* stand together—and comparatively remote from the Myth of the Cave—as being essentially psychological, concerned not so much with right objects and ideas as with the capa-

¹⁰¹ 247 C; Jowett, I. 453.

city of the soul to regulate appetite. And it is also noteworthy that right vision is not a right condition of reason, but grows out of an impulse which is not only low but, when unrestrained, results in conduct which is unnatural and immoral.¹⁰²

Certain other facts are significant: vision is not a natural process of seeing; it is the result of madness. In this madness the prophet, the poet, and the lover are as closely bound together in the bonds of imagination as ever Shakespeare's lunatic, lover, and poet. To the illustration of this theory of vision or inspiration through divine mania, the myth itself is subordinated. The process of the soul therein described is no natural process of discursive thought, but a representation of the soul's capacity, and its method of grasping truth intuitively. Knowledge is a kind of madness. Right knowledge, or right vision, does not involve the rejection of the means to sensible experience, but their proper restraint and use. Thus it will be recalled that in his scheme the wings of the steed are the corporeal element most akin to the divine.¹⁰³

In this process knowledge is not a new state, but rather a recollection of a previous state. The fact that a soul has taken human shape is evidence of its already having seen the truth.¹⁰⁴ In comparison with the varying capacities for insight in human beings it takes various forms. It is noteworthy that in the classes determined by degrees of insight, the philosopher and the poet are now found in the first of nine classes, the prophet in the fifth, the imitative artist in the sixth, and the Sophist in the eighth.¹⁰⁵ Plato is here thinking of the soul's capacity for insight rather than for discursive thought; and this capacity is something more than an ability to keep before it an ideal of absolute Being. It is a question of how a soul, once having seen this reality, this ideal truth and beauty, can come to gaze upon it again. Vision is thus the result of what we may call a spiritualized memory.

This power of vision, or of insight or intuition, constitutes in the scheme of the *Phaedrus* a fourth kind of madness, the madness of the lover. It is the state attainable only by those souls of the highest type, those of the 'philosopher, or artist, or some musical and loving nature.' In this conception Plato's ideal philosopher

¹⁰² 254 A, B; Jowett, I. 460.

¹⁰³ 246 D; Jowett, I. 452.

¹⁰⁴ 250 B; Jowett, I. 456.

¹⁰⁵ 248 D, E; Jowett, I. 454-455.

is also lover and poet; or better, for him the philosopher, the lover, and the poet are of madness all compact. These alone have the highest insight, because these alone have memory in sufficient measure of the eternal beauty of that real world in which they had once dwelt.

But this memory is not a recollection of abstractions. In the *Philebus* Plato had definitely decided that thought both of past and future must be in terms of images. So it is in the *Phaedrus* that the souls with the greatest power of vision are those which in virtue of their memory seeing physical beauty, rise forthwith to the remembrance of the beauty of the Heavenly. They 'are amazed and cannot contain themselves any more; but what it is that moveth them they know not, because that they conceive nothing clearly.'¹⁰⁶ Their madness lies in their inability to perceive the reason for the connection between the earthly copy and the heavenly object of vision.

This beautiful object which recalls to the man of insight the visions of the ideal world is called by Plato a likeness or image.¹⁰⁷ 'Using dull instincts and going unto images, hardly do a few men attain unto the sight of that One Thing whereof they are the images.'¹⁰⁸ Physical beauty is thought of as an image of the spiritual; but the spiritual realities themselves, seen by the pure soul in its innocence, he calls *φάσματα*. Thus it is that the despised 'phantasm' of the early Dialogues comes to be the object of highest vision.

Beauty Itself, shining brightly, it was given unto them then to behold . . . being chosen to be eyewitnesses of visions [*φάσματα*] which are altogether fair. . . . These are the Things which our Souls did then see in pure light.¹⁰⁹

Now, as touching Beauty:—We beheld it shining . . . amongst those other Visions; and when we came hither, we apprehended it glittering most clearly, by means of that sense which in us is the most clear, to wit, eyesight, which is the keenest sense that the body conveyeth. But the eye seeth not Wisdom. . . . But only unto Beauty hath this portion been given.¹¹⁰

It is at this point that Plato's view of phantasy comes into closest relation with aesthetic. The mind cannot intuitively grasp

¹⁰⁶ 250 A; J. A. Stewart, *Myths of Plato*, London, 1905, p. 319.

¹⁰⁷ 250 A, B.

¹⁰⁸ 250 B; Stewart, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁹ 250 C; Stewart, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁰ 250 D; Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

Truth; only when it rises through concrete images of the beautiful can it gaze upon that spiritual Beauty which is Truth made visible. Here phantasy has its highest capacity: the power of the lower soul leads the inspired poet also to contemplate an analogous spiritual phantasm, not merely a product of generalization, but the result of suggestion, an image given through the mind's capacity for remembering celestial Beauty. A lower power of phantasy suggests a higher—which transcends it.

The myth of the *Phaedrus*, then, clearly defines the inspired madness of the poet as a process of contemplating Heavenly Beauty through a capacity for seeing earthly Beauty, and connecting the lower with the higher as image with universal type. The necessary complement of insight is good vision of the bodily eye. The Idea, far from being the object of discursive thought, is to be contemplated by a power capable of connecting a concrete representation with its spiritual counterpart formerly apprehended. Through the restraint of one of the lowest of impulses, inordinate physical love, the soul rises to a recollection of pure love.

Such a doctrine brings the myth of the *Phaedrus* close to the *Timaeus*. Together they constitute the fulfilment of the promise of the *Sophist* by affording a theory of divine phantasy. Both are concerned with the proper restraint of the lower soul as a means to vision; both look upon this vision as a kind of divine mania leading to a contemplation of ideas. Moreover, the process of recollection in the one and the dream-image in the other both involve consideration of the memory as an essential means to vision; not only in the *Philebus* but in these Dialogues as well memory and phantasy are in vital relation.

The *Phaedrus*, however, goes a step beyond the *Timaeus*: it characterizes the concrete images by which recollection takes place as things of beauty, and the Idea so contemplated as Beauty rather than Wisdom. Wisdom, I think that Plato means, is the form which the Idea takes as the object of the philosopher's quest for the highest abstract truth.¹¹¹ There is a point at which he must stop, for Truth in its naked splendor is contemplated only by God. But God gives to the man of insight a further means to vision, if he will make right use of his lower nature. Beyond Reason it is possible for human phantasy to go: impelled by love the poet may

¹¹¹ Cf. Dante, *Convivio*, 3. 12: 'Filosofia è uno amoroso uso di Sapienza.'

see in the beautiful objects of this world images leading one to think of Heavenly Wisdom; which, in this aspect, as the object of phantasy, must take the shape of Beauty. For neither Wisdom nor Justice nor Temperance, but that Beauty which is in all three is an object of vision. Thus Plato crowns his theory of knowledge with a theory in which the phantasy is recognized as the power by which the mind grasps truth made visible by the phantasy of God. Wisdom, Beauty, Love, and Phantasy: these are the terms involved in the Platonic doctrine of poetic inspiration. Wisdom is the goal of all thought; Beauty its highest embodiment; Love the necessary restraint of impulse; and Phantasy the proper use of a power both of presentation and representation that the human may rise to the divine.

Plato's philosopher to whom Truth comes in the form of intuitions is higher than his lover of dialectic. The poet and the seer have truer insight than the thinker—and the statesman. And, Plato would add, the poetry of the Dialogues is nearer to Truth than the processes of discursive thought. In this light, the myth, rather than convincing the reader, impels him to the concrete representation of beauty by means of phantasy; and this representation, in turn, the image of a higher Beauty, recalls to mind those eternal forms of Beauty which are the innate possessions of the soul and the objects of its contemplation. Once more the artistic impulse of the philosopher leads to the illustration of his theory: the myth begins where processes of *διάνοια* end; phantasy takes the place of reason.

Such is the first comprehensive theory of phantasy and imagination. Nowhere is the basic nature of the Platonic view of life more apparent than in the relations established between these powers and the fundamental problems of philosophy. An understanding of his views is essential to the interpretation of all later theory because he has defined 'phantasy' and 'imagination' in at least five fields of thought:—in epistemology, in psychology, in ethics, in theology, and in aesthetic. Let one reflect for a moment on the significance for aesthetic alone of his definition of the two terms. Here was a theory of subjective art as the work of phantasy; of realistic art as a kind of imagination; of symbolic art as the result of a higher activity of the imagination; and finally of inspired poetry and prophecy as the product of the perfect union of divine and human phantasy.

Moreover, Plato's conception of the creative function comprehends both thought and expression.

Finally, the student of Plato has constantly to keep in mind the fact that the creator of the Dialogues would be likely to illustrate his theory by his practice; and one is justified in talking about the dialogue and the myth as types of fancy and imagination.

CHAPTER III

ARISTOTLE

Although there is no explicit theory of phantasy in the *Poetics*, it is a conception deriving ultimately from Aristotle's psychology which prevailed in poetics at least until the eighteenth century, and in general to the exclusion of the no less explicit and more finely developed views of Plato with their direct application to fine art. Aristotle's views were set forth in a way which made them more popular, less difficult of interpretation, while much of the significance of Plato's utterances was soon lost, in part because of their dramatic character, and in part because of the pupil's criticism of the *prima philosophia* of his master. Although Aristotle elaborated many of Plato's suggestions concerning the rôle of phantasy, especially in ethics and psychology, he considered these theories from such a different point of view that the force of these various conceptions, often dependent upon the fundamental tenets of Platonism, was for the most part obscured. Specifically, when Aristotle attacked the doctrine of immanence, he could have little place for a conception of phantasy such as is found in the *Timaeus*, and only hostility for a view which praised the prophet and the poet as men of imagination.

Plato, we have seen, taking into account in his later critical philosophy both immaterial ideas and sensible experience, united both in the function of the seer who in virtue of his phantasy was the man of perfect insight: the lower nature with its appetites and passions, its sensations, and especially its phantasies, became the means to philosophic intuitions and poetic inspiration. But this traditional Platonism practically ignored, since it was mainly interested in contrasting the reality of Ideas and the unreality of the impressions of the senses. Those who have such an attitude, failing to take into account the dramatic character of the Dialogues, are likely to accept the attack upon the poets in *Republic X* at its face value. It seems, indeed, presumptuous not only to include Aristotle among these unsympathetic interpreters—but

actually to make him the father of them; but, whether from design or not, he constantly ignores both the growth of Plato's doctrines, and their dramatic mode of expression. This could hardly have been from ignorance. Aristotle's attitude, one must confess, partakes in many ways of the tactics of the pupil whose natural disposition and deep convictions have led to the setting up of a hostile school. This one says with due regard for the fact that the ends of classical study are best attained by understanding the kinship of the two great philosophers. Here, however, truth is best served by an emphasis upon their differences, or those differences which Aristotle thought to exist, since these vitally determined the course of the theory of phantasy.

The student of the *Metaphysics* recalls the famous criticism of the doctrine of ideas:

Above all, it would be difficult to explain what the Ideas contribute to sensible things, whether to those which are eternal or those which undergo generation and dissolution. For they are not the causes of any movement or change in them. But, once more, they are also of no assistance for the *knowledge* of other things . . . nor do they contribute to their *Being*, since they are not *present in* the things which partake of them.¹

It was Aristotle's most telling objection that Plato regarded the Ideas not only as something apart from things, but as something in which the latter could not participate.² This was the result of an opposition both instinctive and reasoned to the dangers of the Platonic dualism—dangers to which, we have seen, Plato was equally alive. To a thinker like Aristotle, whose basic philosophy is closely connected with a doctrine of form and function, the primary axiom of which is that both science and art are the products of experience,³ such a dualism is untenable. In separating reality from experience, in divorcing the One from the Many, the unchanging from the relative, and the immaterial from the material, it left the great problems of metaphysics unsolved. For Aristotle 'things' were real, and perceptions were means to truth, and between reality and 'appearance,'—'phantasy' in the Platonic sense,—there could be no

¹ 991a, in A. E. Taylor, *Aristotle on His Predecessors* (a translation of the first book of the *Metaph.*), Chicago, 1910, p. 123.

² *Loc. cit.*, note.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 68: 'Art comes into being when many observations of experience give rise to a single universal conviction about a class of similar cases.' *Metaph.*, 981a.

gulf. Aristotle was too empirical and materialistic to regard the world of phenomena as unreal and our impressions as untrustworthy. Hence the substitution of a theory of form and function in an attempt to get rid of the two worlds, one of Ideas, and the other of material images and shadows, and to offer instead a philosophy which would explain both universal concepts and particular impressions as part of a cosmic whole. Everything has its appropriate form or inherent capacity, an ideal which it may realize, something which may be evolved in a progress from the lower to the higher. The means of realization is motion: the living thing is not unchangeable but ever moving, and this movement is its life as it strives to attain the ideal inherent in the universal concept. The 'real' thing, for Aristotle, is thus something which is 'becoming.'

The application of this central principle to the various problems of reflective thought meant the contradiction of many of Plato's most cherished beliefs. In metaphysics Nature could hardly be conceived as the result of the imaginative activity of the Creator, an image of God's thought. In psychology there could not be that complete divorce of the higher and the lower natures; and this lower nature, far from being confined to a reproduction of images of reality, would become a vital means to the knowledge of reality.

This led to a theory of fine art radically different from that of Plato. In his view, to call a work of art an 'imitation' was to regard it as an image or a copy of an original the ideality of which, even if of the proper type, it could never reproduce. To confess that a work of art was the concrete embodiment of an idea was to concede that it was something less than the Idea itself. We have seen that Plato's later doctrine of poetic inspiration modified and supplemented this view, especially in the implications for 'phantasy'; but even in the light of this modification it is apparent that an aesthetic concerned with 'icastic' and 'phantastic' imitation has little in common with the Aristotelian doctrine of form. Aristotle could have little sympathy with certain conceptions of the *Republic* and the *Sophist*, which, if interpreted literally, would deny importance to the stuff of art, notably of the plastic arts, the drama, and the epic. Neither could fine art for Plato come under Aristotle's generalization: 'the result of many observations of experience giving rise to a single universal conviction.' It is the thought of Aristotle, rather, which results in the perpetuation of that interesting commonplace of aesthetic that Phidias to create an Aphrodite had in mind a form of

perfect beauty, the result of many particular observations. The theory of imagination which coincides with such a view grows out of Aristotelian psychology rather than the Dialogues.

We have taken pains to suggest this opposition that we may the better understand the frame of mind in which Aristotle came to the use of a critical term, *μίμησις*, to which Plato, and perhaps others, had already given definite connotations. Whether one regard the *Poetics* as a craftsman's manual, a reader's handbook, or the lecture notes of a great teacher, one must remember that Aristotle had to combat views inimicable to his purposes. If he proposed to deal with the forms and function of poetry in general, and of tragedy in particular, he could not afford, in the light of his basic philosophy, to allow the assumption to remain in the minds of readers that a tragedy was an imitation in a derogatory sense. He had the choice of foregoing the use of a critical term already defined by his master or of redefining it in the light of his own philosophy. He chose the latter alternative, and this immediately made it necessary for him to sever those associations by which Plato had implied the lack of ideality, the stigma of materiality, as in the adjective, *εἰκαστική*, and false subjectivity and illusoriness, as in the term, *φανταστική*. So intent was Aristotle upon destroying these old connotations of *μίμησις* that not once in the *Poetics* is 'imitation' even remotely connected with 'icastic' or 'phantastic,' and it is never implied that imitation is a process of creating either images or impressions. Only once, and then casually, does he speak of 'imaging.'⁴ This silence is in itself significant.

A careful examination of the *Poetics* in the light of our study of the *Republic* and the *Sophist* tends to substantiate this view that Aristotle deliberately combatted Plato's theory of imitation with its threefold scheme of classification according to (1) the ideality or materiality of the *objects*, (2) the objectivity, 'imaginativeness,' or subjectivity, 'phantasticality,' of the *mode*, and (3) the assumed lack of ideality in the *materials* at least of the plastic arts. Disregarding this classification, Aristotle immediately brings together under the term 'imitation' the principal kinds of poetry: the epic, tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambic poetry, the music of the flute

⁴ 1448 a 6, in Ingram Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, Oxford, 1909, p. 6: Διονύσιος δὲ ὁμοίους εἰκάζει. Aristotle does, however, use the expression *εικονοποιός* once (1460 b 9); cf. *ειδωλοποιική* in Plato, *supra*, p. 34.

and of the lyre;⁵ and later painting, dancing, mimicry, and by the side of the latter the Socratic dialogue itself.⁶ Perhaps nothing could be more indicative of Aristotle's purpose than this intentional inclusion under a single term of a Platonic dialogue and the mime which Plato held up to scorn.⁷ Having brought diverse forms of art under the common term, he is ready for a new classification according to the means, the objects, and the manner of imitation. In place of Plato's distinction of media as the use or absence of instruments, Aristotle says that the imitation may be through the medium of color and form, or by the voice,⁸ thus instituting a real distinction between the plastic and non-plastic arts, without questioning their relative ideality.

His treatment of the *objects* of imitation likewise emphasizes his conscious divergence from Plato. Whereas the distinction of the latter concerned the ideality of the objects, Aristotle assumed the reality of the world of the senses from which the subject matter of art and its means of expression must be derived. All creators, whether dramatists, musicians, or actors, imitate actions in the comprehensive sense as the expression of character.⁹ His second distinction, far from corresponding to Plato's, is one involving the moral goodness or badness of the agents. This he applies to all of the fine arts, once more refusing to distinguish music from drama and the plastic arts; in Aristotle's eyes the non-plastic arts could be less ideal than the painting and sculpture severely arraigned in the *Republic* and the *Sophist* for the materiality of their objects.

In respect to the *manner* of imitation there is no question whether the artist is giving the image of an object or merely a phantasy, an impression. Aristotle distinguishes between the epic, the drama, and the lyric as involving narration in the third person, direct speeches, or utterance in which the speaker remains the same throughout.¹⁰ Again, there is reason for believing that he is substituting for Platonic criteria distinctions in manner more in keeping with his own philosophy.¹¹

⁵ 1447 a 13—16.

⁶ 1447 a 28 ff.

⁷ Note the position of 'mimicry' in the *Sophist*; *vide supra*, p. 40.

⁸ 1447 a 18 ff.

⁹ 1448 a 1.

¹⁰ 1448 a 20.

¹¹ For the relation of Aristotle to Plato see Georg Finsler, *Platon und die Aristotelische Poetik*, Leipzig, 1900.

If we may say that one of Plato's objects was a criticism of realism of a bad sort, then it is also to be observed that his pupil's utterances constitute a constructive theory of realism. He was justifying both the material means of imitation and the seemingly unideal objects. The sculptor who studies men and women, and, seeing in them the universal form or ideal, seeks to embody that form in marble, is as lofty an artist as the musician who expresses his feeling by less material means. And tragedy, for Aristotle, far from being a low type of imitation because of the imperfect object of portrayal, the hero with his tragic flaw, becomes Aristotle's specific application of his theory of form to fine art. The world of particular men and women, seemingly condemned by Plato as capable of affording for art only inferior images and untrustworthy phantasies, furnishes the material for the highest idealizations of the poet, who sees in the imperfect matter the perfect form.¹²

One other element must be taken into account in showing how Aristotle sought to do away with Plato's method of criticism, closely bound up with his theory of imagination. In the *Laws* he denies that pleasure is a proper criterion of a work of art, because this obscured the true standard of the correspondence of the creation to an ideal original.¹³ Plato here, again, deprecates any tendency to introduce into criticism subjective standards. Aristotle, rejecting this basis of judgment, sets up as the proper criterion the pleasurable effect of a work of art upon a normal person.

Such a revolution in the theory of fine art could not but work equally important changes in the conception of *φαντασία*. But the immediate effect of this new aesthetic we cannot study, because of Aristotle's deliberate avoidance in the *Poetics* of the terms *φαντασία* and *εἰκασία*. He had evidently determined that his new notions should not be handicapped by old associations. For Aristotle, as for Plato, however, aesthetic was a part of the body of science, all of whose parts were permeated by the same basic principles. In consequence, one may seek to ascertain what Aristotle might

¹² See S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 4th ed., London, 1911. Chap. 3.

¹³ 667 D; Jowett, *op. cit.*, 5. 47: "Then if such be our principles, we must assert that imitation is not to be judged of by pleasure and false opinion; . . . but they are to be judged of by the standard of truth, and by no other whatever. . . . Do we not regard all music as representative (*εἰκαστική*) and imitative? . . . Then, when any one says that music is to be judged of by pleasure, his doctrine cannot be admitted."

have said about the phantasy in fine art by studying his discussion in psychology and ethics. For Aristotle even more than for Plato psychology furnishes the basis for the art of poetry. It is significant that 'phantasy,' carefully avoided throughout the *Poetics*, is re-defined in *De Anima* as an indispensable function in the process from perception to conception. So important is this power, and so comprehensive is the theory, that one is justified in assuming that Aristotle had definite notions concerning its functions in the fine arts. To study his utterances from this point of view will perhaps justify the review of a field which has already been the object of fruitful investigation.¹⁴ Previous studies have, for the most part, been for other ends; little attempt has been made to study Aristotle's conception of phantasy in its relation to the thought of Plato and in the light of its possible application to the theory of fine art.¹⁵

We shall first glance at Aristotle's casual use of the term *φαντασία*. For him it is the faculty in virtue of which we say that we have a phantasm;¹⁶ he attempts to keep close to the literal meaning, excluding metaphorical use.¹⁷ Examples outside of the *De Anima* constantly show feeling for this literal sense. The comet creates the 'appearance' or 'phantasy' of length because of its movement.¹⁸ A star makes its 'appearance' or 'phantasy' after a long time.¹⁹ Each phenomenon has its own proper effect or phantasy. The 'phantasy' is merely the impression upon the mind; the effect may or may not correspond to the cause.²⁰ For Aristotle the phantasy may be true or false. One color, for instance, may have the phantasy of another.²¹ 'Of the phantasies occurring in the air, some are merely apparent, others really existing.'²² There are, however, certain laws governing these phantasies, whereby we need not assume that they are illusions. Aristotle is so far from scepticism in terms

¹⁴ See J. Freudenthal, *Ueber den Begriff des Wortes φαντασία bei Aristoteles*, Göttingen, 1863. This study is valuable in the interpretation of specific passages, especially because of its reliance upon the commentaries of Philoponus, Simplicius, and Themistius. See also Aristotle, *De Anima*, with translation, introduction, and notes by R. D. Hicks, Cambridge, 1907; and J. I. Beare, *op. cit.*, pp. 290 ff.

¹⁵ See, however, Finsler, *op. cit.*, and Butcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 ff.

¹⁶ *De Anima*, 428 a.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Meteor.*, 342 b 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 342 b 33.

²⁰ See, e.g. *Meteor.*, 370 a 15.

²¹ *Meteor.*, 372 b 8. Cf. 374 68.

²² *De Mundo*, 395 a 29.

of 'phantasy' that he asserts that when we are able to give an account of the attributes of a thing in terms of phantasy, then we shall be in a position to give a most exact definition of its essence.²³ It is a statement which no Platonist could have made.

In Aristotle there is always the assumption that there may be a material reality corresponding to the phantasm. The latter, far from being merely an untrustworthy subjective state, is a means to knowledge. The main question for Aristotle is the extent to which this phantasm or phantasy corresponds to its stimulus, and what are the laws of its divergence. The basic empiricism of Aristotle saves phantasy from the charges brought against it by the extreme idealists, that, since it is only a reflection of the material world, it is not reality at all. Plato, in his later philosophy, we have seen, was concerned with phantasy as the result of the operation of the mind upon this material world; error was involved in the mind's method of viewing phenomena. He insisted that phantasy as a power concerned with truth and error was equivalent to opinion, or opinion concretely expressed.

For Aristotle this was to confuse rather than to clarify the problem of error. It involved a failure to distinguish between kinds of knowledge. Plato was quite right in objecting to the materialist's failure to distinguish between sense-perception and conceptual thought; but to insist that phantasy was the expression of opinion indicated an equally serious failure to see the relation in which phantasy stood to sensation, on the one hand, and thought, on the other. Aristotle proposes to steer between the Scylla of materialism and the Charybdis of Platonic idealism with its dangerous dualism, between the view which calls the phantasm a thing, and that which regards it as an unideal kind of judgment concerned with sensible experience. Materialism calls the phantasy true; but in so doing degrades it. Platonism also degrades it by calling it for the most part false. Aristotle set out to vindicate its rights by showing its essential functions between matter and spirit, and carefully noting the laws of its operation. In so doing he established traditions which were to persist for more than two thousand years.

He first proceeded to destroy false notions. Clearly, phantasy is not the same kind of thought as conviction (*ὑπόληψις*), of which opinion is a type, for we can control our phantasies, but not our

²³ *De Anima*, 402 b. The translation by Hicks is followed throughout, although not always quoted *verbatim*.

opinions.²⁴ Opinion as a species of conviction inspires emotion, such as fear; but under the influence of phantasy we are no more affected than if we saw in a picture the objects which inspire terror or confidence. This is a simple appeal to usage; it proves that phantasy and conviction, of which opinion is a type, are two different aspects of thought.²⁵

It is true, however, that phantasy is a faculty of judgment in virtue of which one judges truly or falsely. Thus defined it is again naturally associated with opinion as well as knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), intellect (*νοῦς*), and sensation. But it is clearly not sensation, since in phantasy the stimulus may be absent as in dreams. 'Again sensation is always present, but not so phantasy. Besides, the identity of the two in actuality would involve the possibility that all the brutes have phantasy. But this apparently is not the case; for example, the ant, the bee and the grub do not possess it. Moreover, sensations are always true, but phantasies prove for the most part false. Further, it is not when we direct our energies closely to the sensible object, that we say that this object appears to us to be a man, but rather when we do not distinctly perceive it. . . . And, as we said before, visions present themselves even if we have our eyes closed. Neither, again, can phantasy be ranked with the faculties, like knowledge or intellect, which always judge truly; it may also be false. It remains, then, to consider whether it be opinion, as opinion may be true or false.'²⁶ A second time Aristotle combats the statement that phantasy and opinion are identical. Opinion implies conviction; but brutes, though having phantasy, are never convinced.²⁷ Further, opinion implies the ability to be persuaded by reason, a power which animals do not possess. Hence he concludes: 'It is evident, then, that phantasy is neither opinion joined with sensation nor opinion through sensation, nor yet a complex of opinion and sensation.'²⁸ As has often been remarked, Aristotle is here bringing together and contradicting the definitions to be found in Plato.²⁹ To call phantasy a complex of opinion and sensation,

²⁴ *De Anima*, 3. 3 (427 b); Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 125. The quotations are, for the most part, adaptations of Hicks, with an eye to significant phrasing of the original.

²⁵ τὸ νοεῖν, equivalent to διάνοια.

²⁶ 428 a; Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 125. In quotations I have substituted 'phantasy' for 'imagination' in the translation of *φαντασία*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, in Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²⁹ *Timaeus* 52 A, and *Sophist*, 264 A, B.

he says, is to make it a complex of the sensation of white and the opinion of whiteness, a patent absurdity. It is evident, moreover, that we have false phantasies of the very things of which we have true opinions, as, for instance, of the sun, which appears to be only a foot in diameter, but of the size of which we have a true opinion.³⁰

After having freed phantasy from associations unfavorable to the noting of its proper functions, Aristotle enters upon a constructive process of definition: phantasy is a kind of motion resulting from sensation or perceptive states (ἡ δὲ φαντασία κίνησις τις δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἄνευ αἰσθήσεως γίγνεσθαι).³¹ Two facts are noteworthy: 'phantasy' is defined in the light of the essential Aristotelian idea of movement; and it is made directly dependent upon sensation. To determine whether impressions are true or false, he must first analyze their causes, the three kinds of perception upon which all impressions depend. One is said to perceive something white or red or black; or one may perceive that the white something is a dove or a gull—a simple case of predication; or, finally, in keeping with a special power of the mind, its common sense, one may attach to this white object further attributes of motion and magnitude, or reference to time.³² One perceives, for instance, that a white bird of a given size is flying at such a rate at such a time.

Corresponding to these three kinds of perception there are three kinds of phantasy or concrete presentation. Phantasies of the first type are almost always true. In the other two there is opportunity for error, especially in the third, because there is greater danger of a wrong connection of the separate perceptions going to make up the complete image. It is the third kind of phantasy with which he is later to be especially concerned in his discussion of conceptual thought and of memory. In *De Memoria* he calls the phantasm a product of the common sense.³³ It is through common sense that one can think of an object as having a determinate size and shape,

³⁰ Hicks, *loc. cit.*

³¹ 428 b.

³² Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

³³ *De Memoria*, 450 a, in *Aristotle, De Sensu and De Memoria*, text and tr. by G. R. T. Ross, Cambridge, 1906, p. 103; τὸ φάντασμα τῆς κοινῆς αἰσθήσεως πάθος ἐστίν. Beare, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-312, contains a good discussion of the relation of common sense to phantasy, and especially of αἰσθήματα to φαντάσματα. This is, perhaps, the best connected account in English of the significance of Aristotle's views for the history of psychology; but, like Freudenthal's study, it pays little attention to the influence of Plato's views upon the Aristotelian psychology.

and as belonging to a particular time. Hence the close connection of phantasy with memory and with the problem of error.

Book 3, Chapter 3, ends with an etymology, obviously false, which has since constantly recurred: *φαντασία* is derived from *φᾶος*, meaning light. There are also two hints which point to further investigations: 'Because phantasies remain in us and resemble the corresponding sensations, animals perform many actions under their influence; some, that is, the brutes, through not having intellect, and others, that is, men, because intellect is sometimes obscured by passion or disease or sleep.'³⁴

Reference has already been made to the importance in the philosophy of Aristotle of the idea of movement; for him life is a constant progress from the potential to the actual, lower states constituting stepping stones to higher. In the evolution of thought from perception to conception phantasy may be described as the most essential link, participating in the nature of both. As a species of movement it is in consequence a kind of appetite. If it is regarded as a connecting link between the perceptual and the conceptual, it can be considered as appetite in two senses, for appetite is no single faculty but an aspect of several. From one point of view sensation is a species of appetite, since by means of simple images of sense animals and men are led instinctively to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. Likewise, 'when phantasy moves to action, it does not move to action apart from appetency.'³⁵ So powerful are these simple phantasies in their influence upon action that often in obedience to them men act contrary to their better knowledge; phantasy overrules reason. 'Appetency may move a man in opposition to reason, for concupiscence is a species of appetency. While, however, intellect is always right, appetency and phantasy may be right or wrong. Hence it is invariably the object of appetency which causes motion, but this object may be either the good or the apparent good.' The phantasy of the 'natural man' thus becomes an important element in determining the laws of conduct. By way of anticipation we may add that this is the obvious source of the Stoic opposition of reason and phantasy, an opposition which was to persist throughout the Middle Ages, in part determining a hostile attitude toward the imagination until comparatively recent times.³⁶

³⁴ Hicks, *ibid.*

³⁵ 433 a, in Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

³⁶ For the Stoic view *vide infra*, pp. 87 ff.

Such is Aristotle's account of the rôle of phantasy in the lower soul. It also had its characteristic function in the higher soul. For Aristotle, despite his objection to the Platonic dualism, never completely emancipated himself from the idea of two realms in nature, and likewise in man. For him all mental functions could be divided into two classes: those pertaining to the senses (*αἰσθητα*), and those relating to conceptual thought (*νόητα*), the one involving appetency, the other intelligence.³⁷ In the realm of the latter phantasy has a rôle analogous to its function in the lower soul: 'But to the thinking soul [*διανοητικῇ ψυχῇ*] phantasms serve as present sensations.'³⁸ The soul never thinks without a phantasm. When it affirms or denies good or evil, in reality it seeks or avoids a course made concrete for it by means of phantasms. Thus the phantasy plays an important part in the domain of practical reason in regulating conduct; the deliberative (*βουλευτικῇ*) phantasy is for the reason analogous to the perceptual or aesthetic (*αἰσθητικῇ*) phantasy of the lower soul.³⁹ 'Under the influence of the phantasms or thoughts in the soul you calculate as though you had the objects before your eyes and deliberate about the future in the light of the present. And when you pronounce, just as there in sensation you affirm the pleasant or the painful, here in thought you pursue or avoid [i. e. by similar means, concrete representations or images].'⁴⁰

Aristotle recognizes with Plato that this phantasy of the reproductive type, essential to moral conduct, is also the possession of the mathematician who draws a triangle as a concrete aid in reasoning.⁴¹ He uses a homely illustration: one can hardly think in absolute terms about the predicament of having a snub nose; only as one phantasies a particular person with a snub nose can one think about such a subject at all. 'As without sensation a man would not learn or understand anything, so at the very time when he is actually thinking he must have a phantasm before him.'⁴² Whenever he theorizes, he must make use of phantasms, for they are like sensations, except that they are immaterial.

The phantasy of the simple perceptual type (*αἰσθητικῇ*) is found

³⁷ Hicks, *loc. cit.*

³⁸ 431 a, in Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

³⁹ 434 a; *ibid.*, p. 155. Cf. Plato, *supra*, pp. 47-8.

⁴⁰ 431 b; *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; see also *De Mem.*, 450 a, in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 103. For Plato *vide supra*, pp. 25-6.

⁴² Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

in other animals, but the deliberative (*βουλευτική*) phantasy is peculiar to those who have reason. Man alone has the power of constructing a single phantasy from a number of phantasms of the perceptual type, a form of phantasy which comes from inference.⁴³ This capacity ethics must take into account; we do not seek or avoid this or that course by thinking in abstract terms of honor and love, fear and cowardice, but in each case appetite, impelling one to action through the appeal of pleasure and pain, causes the soul to seek or avoid a concrete representation or phantasy of the contemplated act. When we are influenced by shame, it is because we have before us a picture of ourselves after loss of reputation.⁴⁴ Honor and high reputation are pleasant, too, from there coming into existence a phantasy to each one that such and such is an enviable state.⁴⁵ 'Fear may be defined as a pain or trouble arising from an image [phantasy] of coming evil, destructive or painful.'⁴⁶ 'To be loved is pleasant; for here, too, one has the imagination [phantasy] of possessing a goodness, which all who perceive it desire.'⁴⁷

Thus, in the regulation of conduct the phantasy is a kind of weakened sensation⁴⁸ aiding one in deliberating about the right course by means of concrete pictures affecting the appetite. One is led, for example, to be brave not by thinking of bravery in the abstract, but by holding before oneself the very image of bravery made up of images of brave individuals. Out of many phantasies of the perceptual type one forms the conception of bravery.

This function of phantasy not only transcends the lower presentative type, but tends to regulate and repress the phantasy as it is connected with appetite and instinct. Sometimes the lower phantasy overpowers reason and its attendant deliberative or 'logistic' (*λογιστική*) phantasy;⁴⁹ but at other times with Plato he recognizes the supremacy of the higher. With Plato he might have added that it is the duty of man to keep appetite and perceptual phantasy under the subjection of reason and the phantasy of the higher type.

No one has the right to say that he is the victim of his phan-

⁴³ 434 a, in Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁴⁴ *Rhet.*, 2. 6. 14 (1384 a 23); see tr. by R. C. Jebb, Cambridge, 1909, p. 85.

⁴⁵ *Rhet.*, 1. 11. 16 (1371 a 9); see Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴⁶ *Rhet.*, 2. 5. 1 (1382 a 21); Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁴⁷ *Rhet.*, 1. 11. 17 (1371 a 19); Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁴⁸ *Rhet.*, 1. 11. 6 (1370 b): ἡ δὲ φαντασία ἐστὶν αἰσθησις τις ἀσθενής.

⁴⁹ *De Anima*, 434 a, in Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

tasms.⁵⁰ If man is not responsible for his phantasms, he cannot be held responsible for any of his habits. These habits include his tendencies to form mental pictures. Man must not only consult his deliberative phantasy when it is in conflict with that connected with appetite; but he must see to it that this higher power of creating one phantasy out of many creates forms of good rather than of evil.

One quickly recognizes the influence of the Dialogues in this description of two types of phantasy. Aristotle was apparently trying to avoid the pitfalls of Platonic dualism, when, building upon Plato's conceptions, he defines a power concerned both with perception and conception, sensation and thought, body and soul. Phantasy for Aristotle bridges the gap. But the teaching of the master was evidently too powerful; the pupil persistently puts *νοήματα* over against *αισθήματα*; and, far from regarding *φαντασία* as a precise middle term, he must recognize two kinds of appetite, and two kinds of phantasy.

Since memory is connected with phantasy, he is involved in further perplexity: he must decide whether the former is a state of perception or of conception. It may be called a kind of perception with the idea of time added.⁵¹ It stands in reference to the past as perception to the present and hope to the future. Just as perception is accompanied by a phantasy of the simple perceptual type, and hope by a corresponding power of visualization, so memory, proceeding according to the laws of thought, must have its appropriate activity of the phantasy. We remember a mental picture which gives to the object of remembrance a determinate size and shape, and reference to a particular time.⁵² Memory, then, is essentially perceptive; but it is indirectly one of the conceptual faculties in the mode of its operation.⁵³ Like phantasy it is both perceptual and conceptual; in each case memory would be said to be of the same kind to which the attending operation of phantasy belongs.⁵⁴ There is a memory of perceptions and attendant phantasms; and a memory of thoughts and their phantasies or concrete presentations. 'Memory, even the memory of concepts, cannot

⁵⁰ *Eth. Nic.*, 3. 5 (1114 b). For the Stoic view *vide infra*, p. 94.

⁵¹ *De Mem.*, 449 b, in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁵² This is the third type of phantasy described in *De Anima*, the result of the activity of common sense. *Vide supra*, p. 69.

⁵³ *De Mem.*, 450 a.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

exist without phantasms.⁵⁵ 'Hence it is clear to what psychic faculty memory belongs; it belongs to that to which phantasy must be assigned.'⁵⁶ Memory, then, for Aristotle as for Plato in the *Philebus*, is essentially a matter of phantasy: it is concerned with all mental operations, perceptual and conceptual, which involve concrete representation. Their fields are coextensive; just as there can be no thought without its phantasy, so there can be no memory without its phantasy. This is to be emphasized for the use that the Neoplatonists were later to make of it.⁵⁷

If, then, one is said to remember a phantasy, how can one be said to remember a real object, the original of the image, at all?⁵⁸ It is a question which grows out of Platonism. Aristotle's answer is of great importance for his theory: this phantasy is, as it were, a picture (*ζωγράφημα*) of the real thing; memory is the permanent acquisition of this picture. But if this is true, does one remember the phantasm or its material cause? If we remember the mental image or phantasm, there could be no such thing as the memory of things absent; and, if we remember the material cause, how, again, do we remember the absent object of which we have no phantasm? Once more, if what is remembered is like the original in the fashion of an impression or copy, why is the perception of this very thing the memory of some other thing and not of itself? These dilemmas are hardly worthy of notice, save as Aristotle, giving them attention, in his answer adds to his own theory and in so doing reveals further indebtedness to Plato.

In a painting, he says, the thing represented, e. g. an animal, may be regarded both as real object and as an image of that object. In the same way our phantasy, the picture for the inner eye, must be considered as being both an object of direct consciousness (*θεώρημα*) and, relatively to something else, an image. In its own nature it is an object of direct inspection or a phantasm, a concrete object of thought; but in so far as it is the representation of something else, it is an image and an object of memory. If the mind thinks of it in terms of its own proper nature, it presents itself to consciousness as an object of thought (*νόημα*) or a phantasm; but if it is perceived as like something else, we regard it as we would the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁵⁶ I substitute 'phantasy' throughout for the translator's 'imagination.'

⁵⁷ *Vide infra*, pp. 124-127.

⁵⁸ 450 b, in Ross, *loc. cit.*

painting when we think of it as a copy, or a portrait, e. g. of Coriscus, even though we have never seen him.⁵⁹ The animal in the picture is quite different from a chalk outline: the figure in chalk is a phantasm for the sake of conceptual thought, like the mathematician's triangle; while the artistic semblance in the painting is an image of something else, bringing the memory into play.

This is Aristotle's only attempt to distinguish between the phantasm and the image, the germ of a distinction, quite different from Plato's, between fancy and imagination. The mental image and the artistic representation in and for themselves are phantasms and objects of thought; regarded as copies they are images. Aristotle is obviously indebted to the *Philebus* and *Republic VI* for his conception of the relation of phantasy to thought; but his distinction has no regard for the relative ideality of the process. Phantasms are not peculiar mental states, but are in the truest sense objective.

Having carefully distinguished between the phantasm as a pure object of thought and as material for the memory, he concludes by referring to the possibility that a phantasm originally regarded as *θεώρημα* or *νόημα* may be regarded as a memory-image through one's insistence upon referring it to an original.⁶⁰ Ecstasies, however, are guilty of the opposite error; they take their phantasms, i. e. their imagined beliefs, such as that of having seen certain supernatural beings, as actual happenings, true objects of the memory. 'This comes about when we take what is not a representation [*εἰκόνα*] as though it were one. But exercise strengthens the memory through the repeated performance of the act of recollection, which is merely to view the image frequently as a copy and not in its own nature.'⁶¹

'This is our account of memory and the act of remembering; it is the permanence of an image regarded as the copy of the thing it images. [*φαντάσματος, ὡς εἰκόνος οὐ φάντασμα, ἔξῃς*].'

It is to be noted that this view precludes any doctrine of inspiration in terms of 'phantasy.' The doctrine of recollection in the

⁵⁹ This is a paraphrase of the rendering by Ross. It has an important bearing upon the interpretation of *Poetics* 1448 b, where it is argued that men delight to view a faithful reproduction even of painful objects. Here Aristotle has in mind the distinction between the object of thought (*θεώρημα*) and the image. Works of art from one point of view belong to the latter class; but the artistic consciousness in its recognition of the universality of art is intent upon the *θεώρημα*. See Butcher, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁶⁰ 451 a, in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Phaedrus, involving the phantasy in its loftiest rôle, if not here openly attacked, is at least discountenanced in Aristotle's insistence that the visionary shall not regard his phantasms as having objective realities corresponding to them, as something to be remembered. In like manner, his treatment of phantasy in dreams is at variance with the account in the *Timaeus* of the dream as a phantasy which is given to the foolishness of man for the correction of the lower impulses, and for visions of the future. Again, his method is to inquire in what part of the soul dreams occur. They are clearly not pure percepts, inasmuch as they are not the result of immediate sensation; nor are they pure concepts. Dreams participate in both the perceptual and the conceptual parts of our nature: side by side with the perceptual image there is a resulting process of thought apparent when one tries to set down one's dream from memory. In this process it often happens that along with the dream-phantasy there is another phantasy which is different from the primary impression, being the concrete embodiment of the thought concerning the first image.⁶² This Aristotle calls a conceptual phantasm (*φάντασμα νοητική*), evidently a product of the deliberative phantasy. 'And so it is clear that not every phantasy seen in sleep is a dream, and what we think conceptually we regard as true or false through the organ of opinion.' Aristotle never tires of the distinction between phantasy and opinion: the illusions of our dreams result from the operation of the same power which causes illusions in waking experience,—phantasy rather than opinion. And, just as in the latter state so in dreams, it is opinion which is able to declare that our phantasies are false, or to acquiesce in the assumption that the dream-picture is true.

Aristotle is satisfied that the dream is not essentially the product of thought, although thought in general, and specifically opinion and conceptual phantasy, may issue from the dream.⁶³ As in memory there was the original picture or phantasm coming directly from sensation, and, dependent upon that a picture or phantasy when we remember our ideas, so here also are two similar operations of the phantasy in dreams: the simple dream-image, and a secondary image, which is rather a product of the dreaming state. 'Inasmuch

⁶² *De Insom.*, 458 b, in *Aristotle's Psychology*, (*De Anima and Parva Naturalia*) tr. by W. A. Hammond, London, 1902, p. 232. I substitute 'phantasy' for the translator's 'imagination' and 'fancy'.

⁶³ *I c cit*

as we find that phantasy is akin to sensation, save that their manifestations are different, . . . and since dreaming appears to be a type of phantasy, . . . it is evident that dreaming is a perceptual state, i. e. of that particular perceptual state which phantasies.⁶⁴ This is the account of dreams, which, far from being in accord with Plato's theory of prophetic vision, explains the mental processes in sleep as analogous to those of waking experience.

Not only are these mental processes similar in nature, but the dream-image may have its source in a strong emotional experience of the waking state.⁶⁵ Thus the coward is prone to 'imagine' his enemy both in dreams and waking vision; and the lover, instead of contemplating that beauty which is reminiscent of the eternal idea of beauty, is impelled by his emotions merely to phantasy in sleep or in waking reveries the particular object of his affections. The more impressionable the person, the slighter the thread of connection necessary to induce this process of phantasying. Those who are ill with fever phantasy animals on the wall as the result of very slight resemblances drawn there.⁶⁶ The explanation is that the illusion is the work of phantasy; and the intellect and the faculty of phantasy do not render the same judgments.⁶⁷ Again Aristotle is insisting that opinion, a phase of thought, and phantasy are different. The fever-stricken have illusions because phantasy is active while thought is dormant. The rational faculties, including opinion, are unable to correct phantasy. Under normal conditions the faculty of opinions acts as a check upon this less trustworthy power; it tells one that the sun is more than a foot in diameter, and that the crossed fingers are not touching two objects, although phantasy may report otherwise, and that the boat is moving, when phantasy gives the impression that the shore is in motion.⁶⁸ This check is not present in dreams, in waking reverie, and in the visions which attend fever.

⁶⁴ 459 a, in Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 234. Hammond's tr. has been altered.

⁶⁵ *De Divin.*, 463 a, in Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250.

⁶⁶ *De Insom.*, 460 b, in Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240.

⁶⁷ It is curious to observe how little modern writers have taken advantage of these acute scientific observations concerning dreams and phantasy. In this analysis there is much of which Freud and Ellis, for example, might have made use. Yet an author especially interested in applying the Freudian interpretation of dreams to poetry (F. C. Prescott, *The Poetic Mind*, New York, 1922, pp. 140-141) misses the significance of Aristotle's conception of the rôle of phantasy.

⁶⁸ Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

Again, as in our memories, there is danger of taking the internal impressions, the dream-phantasies, as objective realities. 'If a person is aware that he is asleep, and that under this condition the phantasy occurs, then, indeed, the phantasy will be present, but he will call it a 'phantasm,' since something may tell him that it is only a dream. Sometimes one will detect in waking that these phantasies in sleep are movements of the sense-organs. For instance, the young often see a multitude of moving images in the dark, and conceal themselves in fright. 'From all these facts one must conclude that a dream is a kind of sleeping phantasm. For the imaginings in children just referred to are not dreams, nor is anything else which is seen when we have the free use of our senses. Neither is every phantasy that occurs in sleep, a dream.'⁶⁹

It is in this manner that Aristotle fulfils the promise implicit in his statement in *De Anima* that living beings are ruled by phantasy when reason is obscured by passion or disease or sleep, as is the case with man. These phantasies of the dreamer and the visionary, the lover and the ecstatic, are not peculiar states, but are always capable of being explained as analogous to waking experience. They arise out of sensations, but are to be carefully distinguished from them. Just as in normal experience these phantasies in turn may give rise to intellectual processes, so in dreams one has thoughts coming from the dream-phantasms (*ἐννοιαὶ παρὰ τὰ φαντάσματα*).⁷⁰ Finally, to the dream-consciousness matters of opinion are to be carefully distinguished from the products of phantasy.

Aristotle's account of the power in all its aspects, in the normal processes of thought, in remembering, and in dreaming, is consistent. His utterances concerning the phantasy in dreams confirm the impression of his attitude toward the Platonic views. If he discusses the memory-phantasy in the light of imaginative reminiscence in the *Phaedrus*, the diagnosis of the dream-phantasy has an even more obvious relation to the *Timaeus*. The dream for Aristotle is no means to prophetic truth. If the dream-phantasy has its source in sensation, the element of prophecy must be capable of explanation in terms of waking experience. God does not implant dreams to regulate human conduct; nor are they given to the foolishness of men. 'The theory of divine origin is absurd, because in addition to

⁶⁹ *De Insom.*, 462 a, in Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

its [unreasonableness] one observes that these dreams do not come to the best and wisest but to all sorts of men.'⁷¹

A dream-phantasy may, indeed, foreshadow a future experience. Once the cause and effect relations between the phantasm and the waking experience are established, 'when we are on the point of doing something, or are in the midst of it, or have accomplished it, it frequently happens that we are occupied and busy with the same thing in a distinct dream.'⁷² And the converse may also be true, i. e. 'the movements in sleep are often the starting points for the activities of the day, because the thought for the latter is already started on its way in our nocturnal phantasies. In this sense, therefore, certain dreams may be signs and causes.'⁷³ The accidental is an element of life. Hence even the most extraordinary dream is to be explained as arising out of sensation more easily experienced in sleep than in a waking state.⁷⁴ In the same way, the element of the miraculous in the visions of ecstasies is to be explained by reference to the sensations of normal waking experience.⁷⁵ The most skilful interpreter of these visions will not be a person like Plato's prophet, but rather a man who can establish the closest connection between the phantasm and its cause, the one best able to strip the dream-phantasy of all accessory circumstances that he may understand it in terms of experience,—an interesting description of the rôle of the psychoanalyst. Phantasies, says Aristotle, are like pictures in the water; 'in the latter, when the movement is violent, the reflection and picture bear no resemblance to the reality. And so a clever interpreter is one who can quickly distinguish and see at a glance in the confused and distorted phantasm the suggestion of a man, or horse, or whatever the given object may be.'⁷⁶ Aristotle's interpreter gives the meaning of the dream, not by showing its connection with a world of immutable ideas, of which it is an imaginative reminiscence, but merely by establishing its relation to the material world known through the senses.

⁷¹ *De Divin.*, 462 b, in *ibid.*, p. 248.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 249. See also *Prob.*, 957.

⁷³ Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

⁷⁴ 464 a, in *ibid.*, pp. 252-253: 'These movements awaken phantasies, out of which one sees the future in events similar to the phantasies.'

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

We can perhaps best estimate the importance of this conception of phantasy for the theory of fine art by insisting upon the empirical bases of Aristotle's system. To use Plato's vital distinction between the creative and acquisitive capacities of man, knowledge, acquisition, for Aristotle, comes through contact with material phenomena, and creation, in turn, involves similarly concrete representations. Phantasy, in this view, contributes to the habit of acquisition, or to science, by establishing a relation between perception and conception. It contributes to creation, or to art, by enabling the artist to represent his concept in concrete terms. Had Aristotle not avoided the term *φαντασία* in his theory of poetry, he might have defined it as the power which enables the artist to know phenomena, to abstract from them certain general concepts, and, in turn, to give to these adequate concrete representation. It would have been the view of phantasy of a lofty 'realist,' one who insisted that art is concerned essentially with the material world, comprehended in part and expressed by means of a power which mediates between sensation and conceptual thought.

Certain it is that this phantasy could have had no concern in this view with the recollection of Ideas or with the God-given dream. Aristotle had no doctrine of recollection by means of phantasy, for he recognized no object of contemplation higher than the Form, or inherent capacity of objects first known through the senses. Since for him there is no such gulf between Form and Matter as between Ideas and things in the thought of Plato, there is no place for a belief in imaginative reminiscence. Neither could dreams be a means to insight. The phantasy of the dreamer is the same power which is operative in the waking state, merely functioning under other conditions. The phantasy of dreaming and of remembering is no unique power; it must conform to the laws of experience. Aristotle was not satisfied to ignore this highest conception of phantasy developed in the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*; his discussion of dreams ridicules, and his discussion of memory explains away, Plato's notion of phantasy as the mystic's power of vision. Phantasy neither intuitively grasps nor concretely embodies abstract beauty as something apart from and transcending the beauty visible to the bodily eye. Aristotle's view, which we may call the conception of a realist, is quite different from an idealist's theory of phantasy.

His theory has also little place for phantasy as a power capable of symbolizing the immaterial truths which the mind has grasped. We

have seen how close Plato came to a theory of imaginative symbolism wherein the poet's phantasy would have represented in physical terms those truths which the inner eye had apprehended. Here again, because in the view of Aristotle matter never stands in such a relation to spirit that the one may be called the shadow of the other, we find no theory of symbolism, save perhaps a repetition of Plato's notion that the phantasy can furnish the outline in chalk to aid the processes of conception.

Platonic idealism recognized one more function for phantasy in fine art: the mere imitation of the external world. This had seemingly been Plato's earliest notion,—a notion which he later modified and supplemented by his theory of imaginative vision. This view would have been equally unsatisfactory to Aristotle: it failed to establish the true relation between perception and conception, between things and ideas, between matter and form. A crass materialist would have accepted it; but Aristotle had as little sympathy with extreme materialism as Plato in his later thought with extreme idealism. For Aristotle, we must remember, the memory-image was not only a copy of external reality but an object of thought. This is probably the psychological basis of the distinction in the *Poetics* between two kinds of pleasure resulting from imitations: the reference of the image to its original, and the contemplation of the imitation for its own sake.⁷⁷ It is with pleasure arising from the latter that the *Poetics* is almost entirely concerned.

To regard phantasy as a power of copying would be to look upon nature as inert and static; but nature, for Aristotle, is ever active, ever realizing the capacity inherent in each kind of matter. If art, then, be an imitation of nature, it must not be content to reproduce, but it must seek to imitate the method of nature. The Aristotelian idea of movement is vital in the theory of fine art; art is not the imitation of a world of being, but of a universe wherein all things are coming to be, i.e. striving through movement to realize their inherent capacities, enabling the observer to see in the poet's creation a general view of nature's purposes and her method. In this view the imitation, the artistic creation, would have been regarded, not as a simple image or phantasm to be compared with its original, but as a phantasm, considered as *θεώρημα*, an object of thought. This is not a power of reproducing particular experiences;

⁷⁷ *Poetics*, 1448 b, in Bywater, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 9.

but of abstracting from particular instances a universal concept, and of seeing in this not an average but an ideal which it is the function of art to reproduce. From the sight of many beautiful women phantasy is able to conceive of a type which may assume the ideality of an Aphrodite. This, for Aristotle, had he chosen to use the term, would have been the highest rôle of phantasy in fine art, to conceive of the ideal by means of generalization from the particular phantasies, and to represent in turn these ideals through phantasies. It is a capacity both for ideal conception and for ideal representation; but, even had such a theory been developed in his aesthetic, it would have been the description of an activity quite different from that which by gazing upon earthly beauty is led forthwith to the contemplation of the heavenly.

CHAPTER IV

POST-ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY

The two great theories of phantasy already studied are so basic for later thought that the generalization may be hazarded that every subsequent conception grows out of one or the other. Many speculations, especially, as we shall see, concerning the function of phantasy in moral conduct, have common ground in Plato and Aristotle; but to the extent that 'phantasy' was defined in the light of a dominating belief in the reality of the immaterial or the essential validity of a world of sense-experience, the view of *φαντασία* is likely to have been influenced, not alone by the *prima philosophia* of one rather than the other, but by their specific descriptions of the power. The problems of the historian are, in consequence, not simple, since one may not merely assert that a view derived from Plato or from Aristotle. Thought is not thus simple. Platonism, for instance, never adequately reproduced or interpreted the views of the Dialogues, since that involved great insight with profound appreciation both of the problems and of the methods of solution. The normal tendency of the Academy was to seize upon one aspect of Plato's theory, the doctrine of Ideas, as something quite apart from things, and in the light of this to belittle any function of the mind which depends upon the phenomenal world for its materials. It led to an extravagant dualism which ignored Plato's belief that vision depended in part upon a proper use of the lower functions, and hence, emphasizing the reality of the spiritual, and the unreality of the material, the contingent, and the apparent, it depreciated phantasy along with passion and sensation. This is, on the whole, the attitude of the Academy, both Old and New, as distinct from the point of view of the Platonist of insight, who, in the spirit of the father of critical philosophy, endeavored to see the relation of phantasy both to thought and expression.

It is much the same with the Aristotelian tradition. There were, of course, differences in the degree to which the utterances of the master and his underlying method were understood; but it was easier for the views of Aristotle to assume the shape of a theory at

the hands of his pupils. He appealed, it would seem, to a very simple scientific interest, an interest in the analysis and classification of processes; and this is more simple, and more popular, than the sympathetic interpretation of Plato. A comparatively small mind could comment upon the undramatic utterances of Aristotle, refine upon them, popularize, or apply them; and hence the wealth of detail and supplementation which one finds in this tradition throughout late classical and mediaeval thought. Hence, too, perhaps, the failure to derive from these amplifications much of constructive value. Commentary upon and amplification of the views of *De Anima* and *De Memoria*, while helping to constitute a tradition, added little save in conjunction with the study of Plato.

In considering the scanty materials left by the Academy and the Peripatetic school one must keep in mind certain prevailing interests of the time. 'The two main tasks of the later Greek philosophy were, as Cicero often insists, one dialectical, the establishment of a criterion, such as would suffice to distinguish the true from the false; and one ethical, the determination of the summum bonum, or moral standard.'¹ With these two interests Platonism would have little place for phantasy. The theory of the Academy became nothing short of a refined scepticism. Our phantasies, we learn, may come from that which does not exist; they may be illusions.² There can be no such thing as a phantasy known absolutely to have been derived from an objective reality.³ One may merely affirm that one has a phantasy which is probable (*φαντασίαν πιθανήν*), i. e. a mental impression which is probably a true image.⁴ This seems to have been the teaching of Arcesilaus (fl. 241 B.C.).⁵ Carneades, of the New Academy, demanded still other qualifications of phantasies: they must be capable of being put to the test (*διεξωδευμένας*), and neither digressive (*περιωδευμένας*) nor capable of being distracted (*ἀπερισπάστους*).⁶ These thinkers, developing their views mainly in opposition to the Stoic theory of knowledge, were unconstructive, because they seized upon only one aspect of the teachings of

¹ *M. Tulli Ciceronis Academica*, ed. by James S. Reid, London, 1885, Intro., pp. 10, 11.

² Sextus, *op. cit.*, 1. 103-4; 2. 344; 2. 386.

³ *The Academics of Cicero*, tr. by James S. Reid, London, 1880, p. 38.

⁴ Sextus, *op. cit.*, 1. 102.

⁵ See, however, Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁶ Sextus, *ibid.* See Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 218, note 3. For the relation of Arcesilaus and Carneades to Stoicism *vide infra*, note 28.

Plato, and were interested in those problems which caused them to deny the bases of knowledge in experience.

The Peripatetics also added little. From Theophrastus (d. 287 B.C.) Aristotle's successor, we might expect much; but his work on phantasy is not extant,⁷ and his work on perception yields but scanty references to phantasy. His two uses of the latter term⁸ are in quotations of Democritus, and probably illustrate his usage. 'As for the other sensory objects, he holds that none has an objective reality, but that one and all are effects in our sensuous faculty as it undergoes alteration—and that from this faculty arises the phantasy.'⁹ Sextus records the teachings of the school as essentially in accord with the views of *De Anima*.¹⁰ Curiously, the development of the Aristotelian tradition was to be the work, not of the Peripatetics, but of the Stoics and Neoplatonists.¹¹

⁷ See *Prisciani Philosophi Lydi Metaphrasis in librum Theophrasti de sensu, et de phantasia*, in *Theophrasti Eresii Opera*, ed. by F. Wimmer, 3 vols., Lipsiae, 1854-62, 3. 261 ff. Priscian, a Neoplatonist of the reign of Justinian, attributes no new concepts to Theophrastus, who seems to follow closely *De An.*, 3. 3.

⁸ See G. M. Stratton, *Theophrastus*, London, 1917, pp. 63, 64, and 123.

⁹ Stratton, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁰ Sextus, *op. cit.*, 2. 336.

¹¹ The great commentators, beginning with Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 210 A.D.) added little to the Aristotelian theory. See *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis Praeter Commentaria de Anima*, ed. I. Brun, Berlin, 1887, pp. 66-74. Siebeck (*op. cit.*, 2. 200-1), however, thinks that Alexander approaches the modern meaning of *φαντασία*: 'So wenn Alexander (d. an 135 a unt.) hinsichtlich ihres unterschiedes von der Empfindung hervorhebt, jene zwar stehe nicht in unserer Macht, wohl aber die Phantasie; die Empfindung der specifischen Eigenthümlichkeiten sei immer wahr, der Inhalt der Phantasie hingegen nicht, da ihr im Gegensatze zur Meinung, das Bewusstsein der Thatsächlichkeit fehlt (135 b ob. f.). Die Phantasie, wie Alexander (ebd.) definirt, ist eine von der Empfindung zurückbleibende Spur, eine Typus, zu dem aber noch die Wirkung der anschaulichen Vorstellungsthätigkeit (τῆς φανταστικῆς δυνάμεως ἐνέργεια) hinzukommt.' He finds a similar view in Themistius, 2. 169. See also Themistius, (375 A.D.) (*Themistii in Libros Aristotelis De Anima Paraphrasis*, ed. Heinze, Berlin, 1890, pp. 89 ff.) who faithfully reproduces the argument of *De Anima*, 3. 3. Following A. he constantly uses the phrase τὴν δύναμιν φανταστικὴν, on the analogy of αἰσθητικὴν: τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἐστὶ καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ἀποφύνασθαι, ὅτι καθὸ μὲν κινεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰσθητικὴν ἔχει τὴν δύναμιν, καθὸ δὲ τηρεῖν οἷα τε τὰ αἰσθημένα, φανταστικὴν. δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι, ἡνίκα καὶ ἡ αἰσθησις περὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἐνεργεῖ, τηνικαῦτα ἡ φαντασία. (p. 92). By his time the *φαντασία* βουλευτική of A. has become λογική, (cf. *De Anima*, 434 a) a phraseology which was to persist throughout the Middle Ages. See also Simplicius (d. 549 A.D.) (*Simplicii in Libros Aristotelis De Anima Commentaria*, ed. Hayduck, Berlin, 1882) and Philoponus (6th century A.D.) (*Ioannis Philoponi in Aristotelis De Anima Libros Commentaria*, ed. Hayduck, Berlin, 1897). The latter has one significant passage (p. 497): 'Ἐπειδὴ ἀνωτέρω ἐλέγην ὅτι ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ φαντασθῆναι ὃ δὲ βουλόμεθα, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκουσίου φαντασίας ἡρμοσθῆναι, ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ ἀκούσιως φαντασία ἡ ἐκ τῶν φαντασμάτων λαμβανομένη, τουτέστιν ἐκ τῶν αἰσθη-

Philo Judaeus (c. 20 B.C.—c. 54 A.D.), usually considered a Platonist, probably reflects the Aristotelian tradition when he writes: "For a living animal is superior to that which is not a living animal in two points, phantasy and appetite. Accordingly, phantasy consists in the approach of the external object striking the mind by means of the sensations. And appetite is the brother of phantasy, according to the intensive power of the mind, which the mind keeps on the stretch, by means of the sensation, and so touches the subject matter, and comes over to it, being eager to arrive at and comprehend it."¹² One detects here a confusion of the Aristotelian notion that phantasy is a species of appetite.

Epicureanism added nothing to the theory of *φαντασία*. The Cyrenaics, although they assumed the truth of individual phantasies, suspended judgment concerning the correspondence of these to their stimuli. When opinion 'goes forth and attempts to be curious in judging and pronouncing concerning exterior [external?] things, it often deceives itself, and opposes others, who for the same objects receive contrary impressions and different phantasies.'¹³ Upon this scepticism Epicurus (341–270 B.C.) apparently based his conception; his philosophy, with bases in materialism, and especially in the atomism of Democritus, assumes the reality of the phenomenal, and hence the validity of all phantasies. For him the individual phantasy is true, whether it comes from a real object or merely from an idol (*εἰδωλον*). For instance, when Orestes thinks that he sees his sister, his phantasy is as truly a phantasy as though she were there. Error creeps in, for Epicurus as for the Cyrenaics,

τῶν, καὶ οὐ μόνη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκούσιος, ἣν εἶπεν ἐκ μεταφορᾶς δικαίως ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τῶν ὄντων μεταφέρει ἀνέπλασμα τοῦ μὴ ὄντος, ἐξ ἵππου φέρε εἰπεῖν καὶ ταύρου Ἴπποκένταυρον, εἰ οὖν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀκούσιος φαντασία, οὐκ ἄρα δ θέλω φαντάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μᾶ τινι δυνάμει κριτικῇ τὸ ψεύδους φαντάζεσθαι καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὡς ἀλήθειαν. The materials are present in Aristotle for a recognition of this 'free phantasy,' the free play of imagination; but in him there is no statement so explicit as this. This recognition of the power of phantasy to conceive of hippocentaurs, chimaeras, and castles in Spain was to become a commonplace of mediaeval views. *Vide infra*, p. 102. Between Aristotle and Philoponus there is probably a Stoic intermediary. Siebeck, *op. cit.*, 2. 355–6, comments upon this recognition by Philoponus of two kinds of phantasy, reproductive and combinatory; but he makes no attempt to discover sources.

¹² *Philonis Alexandrini Opera*, 4 vols., Berlin, 1896–1906, 1. 58, in *Works of Philo Judaeus*, tr. by C. D. Yonge, 4 vols., London, 1890. 1. 59–60.

¹³ See Plutarch, *Against Colotes the Epicurean*, 24, in *Opera*, ed. Bernardakis, 7 vols., 6. 459; tr. in *Plutarch's Morals*, tr. by various hands, ed. by W. W. Goodwin, 5 vols., Boston, 1871, 5. 368.

when opinion attempts to determine the source of the phantasy.¹⁴ Epicurus at least went beyond Democritus: phantasies are neither idols (εἰδωλα) nor external stimuli (ἀπορροία), but impressions. Other Epicurean atomists, however, did not always distinguish between the material cause and the mental state. Thus Lucretius (95-52 B.C.) for εἰδωλον uses *simulacrum*, *imago*, and *effigia*, explaining through the use of these terms for material images the presence of ghosts, chimaeras, optical illusions in mirrors, and other psychological states.¹⁵ His account of *visiones* in Book IV closely follows the atomism of other Epicureans.¹⁶

The Academy, the Peripatetic school, and the Epicureans seem to have done little to develop the Platonic and Aristotelian theories of φαντασία. It is to Stoicism that one turns for a theory which takes advantage of the rich heritage of the thought of the two great thinkers. It is, in consequence, the view which, next to these, is the most important influence upon subsequent conceptions in classical and mediaeval thought. Although this Stoic view has Aristotelian psychology as its basis,¹⁷ and is, on the whole, constructive, its influence was detrimental to a full recognition of certain vital aspects of the theory of *De Anima*. The Aristotelian view, we have seen, is the result of keen psychological analysis: the rôle of phantasy in all fields of thought was carefully sketched. In Stoicism, however, the term is important, not for descriptive psychology, but for epistemology and for an ethics dependent upon this. Although much of the material is derived from Aristotle, the spirit and the method suggest the Dialogues. We can perhaps best understand the strategic position of Stoicism in the history of theories of phantasy by reflecting that the scientific description by Aristotle of φαντασία as one of a number of related mental powers, all essential to thought, gave to that power the opportunity at least of striving for full recognition of its dignity. If people were not sufficiently in sympathy with the poet of the Dialogues to understand his great constructive views, by following the lines of investigation suggested by Aristotle they might have arrived at a view which, at least, was not primarily a depreciation. But Stoicism, although it borrowed heavily from

¹⁴ Sextus, *op. cit.*, 2. 415-6; Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁵ See John Masson, *Lucretius Epicurean and Poet*, London, 1907, p. 143.

¹⁶ *De Rerum Natura*, Book IV, ll. 30 ff.

¹⁷ See A. C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, London, 1891, p. 24.

De Anima, recognized only a rational faculty, and hence its theory of knowledge, concerned primarily with the correctness of judgments, the problem which Epicureanism gave up in despair, defines 'phantasy' in connection with the question of the reality of a material world corresponding to our phantasies, and the establishment of an adequate criterion.¹⁸ Upon this estimate of the trustworthiness of phantasies rested for them the science of conduct.

Phantasies, they said, in opposition to the Atomists, were mental impressions (*τυπώσεις*) rather than external sensibilia, *εἰδωλα*. The Stoics were in substantial agreement that these phantasies were subjective states. Cleanthes (331–232 B.C.), however, was sufficiently materialistic to say that they were like imprints in wax.¹⁹ This position Chrysippus (c. 280–206 B.C.) attacked, calling them 'alterations,' in this notion evidently being in close agreement with his master, Zeno.²⁰ These phantasies, generally regarded as mental states, were basic for knowledge. For the Stoics the science of knowledge, dialectics, was 'divided into two parts; one of which has reference to the things signified, the other to the expression. That which has reference to the things signified or spoken of, they divide again into the topic of things conceived in the fancy, and into those of axioms. . . .'²¹ The first concern of the Stoic was for the grounds of belief, and this for him involved phantasy. 'The Stoics have chosen to treat, in the first place, of phantasy and sensation, because the criterion by which the truth of facts is ascertained is a kind of phantasy; and because the judgment which expresses the belief, and the comprehension, and the understanding of a thing, a judgment which precedes all others, cannot exist without phantasy.'²²

This mental impression which they regarded as basic for conceptual thought they called the 'cataleptic phantasy' (*φαντασία καταληπτική*), the mental impression which compels assent or acceptance as true, a criterion of facts produced by a real object, and

¹⁸ See R. D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean*, New York, 1910, pp. 64 ff.

¹⁹ Sextus, *adv. Math.*, 7. 227 ff.; see *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. by J. von Arnim, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1903, 2. 22. See also Diog. Laer., 7. 46, in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius, tr. by C. D. Yonge, London, 1909, p. 276.

²⁰ Von Arnim, *ibid.*; Yonge, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

²¹ Diog. Laer., tr. Yonge, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 277. For the difference between this view and the Aristotelian see Siebeck, *op. cit.*, 2. 212 ff.

conformable to that object.²³ The non-cataleptic (*ἀκατάληπτον*) phantasy, then, would be defined as the mental impression which has no relation to reality, or, if it has, then such that there is no correspondence between the appearance and reality, but only a vague and indistinct representation.²⁴ This the Stoics, following Aristotle, called a 'phantasm,' 'a conception of the intellect such as takes place in sleep.'²⁵ And just as there must be for the *φαντασία*, the true impression, an external source, something to be phantasied, *τὸ φαντάστων*, so for Chrysippus, and probably for other Stoics, there must be that which corresponded to the *φάντασμα*, the illusory or phantastical, *τὸ φανταστικόν*.²⁶ Our distinction between the 'imaginative' and the 'fantastic,' although explicit in Plato's *Sophist*, derives from the Stoics. The persistence of this fourfold distinction throughout the Middle Ages would, in the absence of other evidence, point to the influence of the Stoic tradition.

'Phantasm' and 'phantastic' are thus for the Stoics terms denoting the unreality of the vision. Not only is the dream called a 'phantasm,' but the illusions of waking experience as well. The same excitation may result in impressions having varying degrees of genuineness according to the physical condition of the percipient. Thousands who are insane or melancholy have what are really phantasies in the sense that they have sources in external reality; yet, since there is no true correspondence between the phenomenon and the impression, these are to be called 'phantasms.' Such are the visions of Orestes, who thought that he saw his sister, who was,

²³ Cicero, *Acad.*, ed. by Reid, p. 194, Sextus, *adv. Math.*, 7. 227, quoted in von Arnim, *op. cit.*, 2. 22; Diog. Laer., 7. 46, in Yonge, *op. cit.*, p. 276. For various interpretations of the term see Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-65, and Siebeck, *op. cit.*, 2. 498 f. See also Diog. Laer., 7. 54.

²⁴ Diog. Laer., 7. 46, in Yonge, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

²⁶ Von Arnim, *op. cit.*, 2. 21, quotes *Aëtii plac.*, 4. 12. 1, as primary source of this distinction. See also Plutarch, *de plac. phil.*, 4. 900, an obvious copy of Aëtius above, in Plutarch *Moralia*, ed. Bernardakis, 7 vols., Lipsiae, 1888-96, 5. 339; for tr. see *Plutarch's Morals*, ed. by W. W. Goodwin, 5 vols., Boston, 1871, 3. 167. For other documents derived from Aëtius see Galen, *de hist. phil.*, liber spurius, in *Medicorum Graecorum Opera*, ed. Kuhn, 23 vols., Leipzig, 1830, 19. 305; and Nemesius Emesenus, *De Natura Hominis*, ed. Matthaei, Halae Magdeburgicae, 1802, p. 171: ΚΕΦ Σ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΤ ΦΑΝΤΑΣΤΙΚΟΤ. For the importance of Nemesius in handing down this tradition *vide infra*, p. 180. For still another expression of the distinction, probably derived from the Stoics, although perhaps deriving immediately from Aristotle, see *Alexandri Aphrod. Com. de Anima*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

indeed, dead. This is an impression of the acataleptic type, a phantasm.²⁷

By this insistence that our phantasies may result in error the Stoics were seemingly led into a perplexing situation. This doctrine, says Plutarch, their severe critic, does not square with their belief in Fate.²⁸ If Fate is responsible for these phantasms, is she also responsible for the fact that we often consent to them, i. e. regard them as true? If these phantasms are not the work of Fate, then Fate is not responsible for our judgments, is not the controlling factor in our lives.²⁹ One of three things is true: every phantasy is not the work of Fate, or every phantasy or opinion is faultless, or the doctrine of Fate is open to censure. Such is the dilemma in which Plutarch placed the Stoics, setting their theory of phantasy over against their fatalism. He represents Chrysippus as asserting that God prints in us false phantasies. This would be to make God the cause of error.

The argument, of course, seems trivial, especially when we recall Plato's summary disposal of the idea that God is the cause of our phantasms, and Aristotle's cogent reasoning concerning our moral responsibility for our false impressions. But Stoicism, having emphasized the possibility of falsity, had introduced as vital for dialectic and for ethics the problem of the *φαντασίαν πιθανήν*, the probable phantasy. It is this view, which directs the attention to the phantasm quite as much as to the phantasy, which is responsible in no small measure for a later preoccupation with the dangers of imagi-

²⁷ *Aëtii plac.*, quoted by von Arnim, *op. cit.*, I. 22; see also Sextus, *adv. Math.*, 7. 242. Compare Longinus, *infra*, p. 108.

²⁸ Plutarch, *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis*, 1055-1057, in *Moralia*, *op. cit.*, 6. 275 f. in tr. *op. cit.*, 4. 474, 477. This doctrine seems from the first to have been the object of attack, especially from the Academy. A fragment from Eusebius, supposedly quoting Numenius (2nd. cen. A.D.) *Numenius of Apamea*, tr. by K. S. Guthrie, London, n.d., p. 74 f.) asserts that the Academy kept its footing in the conflict with the Stoa by adhering to its position in regard to 'cataleptic phantasies.' When Arcesilaus and Zeno quarreled, the former vigorously opposed the doctrine of 'cataleptic phantasy' first taught by Zeno. An amusing story is told about one Lykydes, who, accepting the Academic doctrine that phantasies cannot be comprehended, that they are untrustworthy, is constantly made the victim of his slaves, who, schooled in Stoic doctrine, by retorting his own position upon him to his own great discomfiture, cause him finally to accept in self-defence the doctrine of the cataleptic phantasy. Carneades, the founder of the third Academy, modified this uncompromising position of Arcesilaus by asserting that it was humanly impossible to refrain from judgment about all things. (p. 86). He refers to phantasies as *θετικὰς* and *ἀπορητικὰς* (p. 89).

²⁹ *Moralia*, tr., *op. cit.*, 4. 476.

nation. The psychology of the demonologist, for instance, takes the student back to the Stoic distinction between the properly imaginative and the phantastic, the cataleptic and the non-cataleptic.

We must not assume, however, that the Stoics were altogether concerned with contemplating the dangers of imagination. They did much, indeed, to perpetuate Aristotelian views. They distinguished, for instance, between an 'aesthetic' (αἰσθητική) and a 'non-aesthetic' phantasy, the presentative and the reproductive image.³⁰ It was a belief in this latter kind of phantasy in the service of thought which caused Chrysippus to criticize the materialistic view of Cleanthes. The view that the phantasy was like seal in wax, said Chrysippus, did not account for the power which the mind possesses to picture, first a triangle, then a quadrangle. This capacity is obviously connected with another Aristotelian distinction between the deliberative (βουλευτική) and the non-deliberative phantasy.³¹ The former belonged to beings capable of reason, while the latter was obviously of the perceptual type. What the Stoics meant by their distinction between an artistic phantasy (φαντασία τεχνική) and a non-artistic, one can only conjecture.³² In explanation we are merely told that an artist looks upon a phantasy in a different light from that in which it is viewed by a man ignorant of art. Perhaps they had in mind Aristotle's distinction between a painting, i. e. a phantasy regarded as an image, and as an object of thought apart from its imitative qualities. Diogenes, our source, was drawing his material from a work of Diocles of Magnesia, who was merely bringing together certain striking distinctions made by the Stoics. Unfortunately, therefore, we have no way of knowing what use was made of these distinctions. In one field, alone—ethics—we have adequate knowledge of their application of these terms.

Before turning to the outstanding example of Stoic ethics, we shall glance at the utterances of a writer, Sextus Empiricus, often quoted as a source of information concerning the philosophical position of his contemporaries. The sceptics, and especially Sextus, were interested in our phantasies mainly because they thought that our inability to judge these phantasies, to have a cataleptic phantasy, an impression known to correspond to its stimulus, swept

³⁰ Yonge, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

³² *Loc. cit.* For another view of the importance of the Stoic concept see Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 97-99. *Vide infra*, 109, 111.

away all certain grounds of constructive philosophy. It would be fruitless to attempt to count uses of the term in Sextus, or to follow the reasoning adopted by him and attributed to Pyrrho. It is sufficient to remark that he pits Stoic view of 'phantasy' against Epicurean, Platonist against Stoic, Stoic against Stoic, merely to prove the contradictoriness of all constructive theories of knowledge, and, in consequence, arrives at no more constructive view than the interesting assertion that, if every phantasy is true, then the phantasy that no phantasy is true is also true.³³ We can leave Sextus with the statement that only constructive theories of life have contributed to the concept of imagination; but, in so far as he represents a tendency, he must be taken into account. He is mainly valuable, however, in this study for the quotations from those whom he attacks.

If the study of the Stoic dialectic were not sufficient to demonstrate the importance for subsequent thought of their view of 'phantasy,' their use of the term in ethics should prove decisive. Here the application of the distinctions of their dialectic to the problems of conduct served to enforce the unfavorable attitude of literal Platonism, and to perpetuate prejudices against imagination which were to persist until the nineteenth century. It is the Stoic view which emphasized, probably better than anything in Plato, the contrast between vain and illusory phantasies, and man's controlling principle, and which insisted, 'therefore, that the great ethical problem is the right use of phantasies. If the views of the great Stoic moralist, Epictetus, are described in more detail than at first their importance might seem to warrant, it is that we may the more easily confirm the view that it is to Stoicism as well as to Neoplatonism, and sometimes more than to Neoplatonism, that one turns for the source of a persistent mediaeval tradition.

The Stoic views which we have glanced at are for the most part theoretical. Epictetus is eminently practical: he is aware of the

³³ Sextus, *op. cit.*, 2. 319. See also pp. 320 ff., and the annotation of Stephanus (*In Pyrrhon. Annot. Henr. Stephani*) in *op. cit.*, 1. 333-337. Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Attic.* xi. 5, in *A. Gellii Noct. Attic.*, ed. by C. Hosius, 2 vols., Lipsiae, 1903, 2. 7) also testifies to the basic nature of the discussions of *φαντασία* in the literature of Scepticism: 'Utrique enim σκεπτικοί, ἑκτικοί, ἀπορητικοί dicuntur, quoniam utrique nihil adfirmant nihilque comprehendere putant. Sed ex omnibus rebus proinde visa dicunt fieri, quas *φαντασίας* appellant, non ut rerum ipsarum natura est, sed ut adfectio animi corporisve est eorum, ad quos ea visa perveniunt.' For *visa* as a translation of *φαντασία* see p. 106 and note.

distinctions which others have made for the sake of thought; but for him their only value is their applicability. In an interesting passage on the right attitude toward books he compares the desire for books when action is in order with the attitude of the athlete who, entering the stadium for the contest, desires to return to gymnastic exercises; and, second, to the desire for further knowledge of the problem of comprehension, when right comprehension, a practical problem of ethics, is the order of the day. 'This is just as if in the topic (matter) of assent when phantasies present themselves, some of which can be comprehended, and some cannot be comprehended, we should not choose to distinguish them but should choose to read what has been written about comprehension (κατάληψις).'³⁴ This practical attitude, that interest in the question of the validity of phantasies is only for the sake of better conduct, regulates his entire discussion.

The ethics of Epictetus begins in the recognition of the existence of phantasies or impressions as distinct from external stimuli. The fact that men have phantasies which may or may not correspond to reality is, for him, as for the Stoics generally, and for their opponents of the Academy and the Sceptical school, a vital consideration, and constitutes the basis of his moral program. While, with other Stoics, accepting many ideas derived from the Aristotelian psychology, like them he ignores a vital distinction of *De Anima*, and with Plato identifies phantasy and opinion. He proceeds to describe our whole moral lives as impelled by these phantasies or opinions: 'to man the measure of every act is the phantasy,—whether the thing appears good or bad: if good, he is free from blame; if bad, himself suffers the penalty.'³⁵ Epictetus is here merely describing the life of the unphilosophical man—the unregulated life—as pursued in the light of phantasies. For him phantasies as data of ethics are quite as basic as was appetite for Aristotle. All great and dreadful deeds, we are told, originate in phantasy,—in this and nothing else. In this light 'the *Iliad* is nothing else than phantasy and the use of phantasies. A phantasy came to Paris to carry off Helen; and Helen had the phantasy to follow him. If Menelaus had "fancied" that it was to his advantage to be rid of such a wife, there would have been

³⁴ *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*, ed. by H. Schenkl, Lipsiae, 1916, 4. 4 (395), in *Discourses of Epictetus*, tr. by George Long, London, 1912, p. 327. I have substituted 'phantasies' for 'appearances' in this and subsequent quotations without using brackets.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 28, in Long, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

neither *Iliad* nor *Odyssey*.³⁶ In the same way 'the thief does not know wherein man's good consists, but he "fancies" that it consists in having fine clothes.'³⁷

The significant fact for the Stoic is that these phantasies, these mental impressions which impel our acts, are within our power. Since this is true, it is the business of the rational being to develop the habit of 'saying to every harsh [i. e. contrary to reason] phantasy, You are a phantasy and in no manner what you appear to be.'³⁸ The great difference between man, the rational being, and irrational animals, in virtue of which the former may be called 'good,' is that he has the power of controlling his phantasies, the use of reason:

Now plants have not even the power of using phantasies, and for this reason you do not apply the term good to them. The good then requires the use of phantasies. Does it require this use only? For if you say that it requires this use only, say that the good, and that happiness and unhappiness are in irrational animals also. But you do not say this, and you do right; for if they possess even in the highest degree the use of phantasies, yet they have not the faculty of understanding the use of phantasies; and there is good reason for this, for they exist for the purpose of serving others, and they exercise no superiority. For the ass, I suppose, does not exist for any superiority over others. No; but because we had need of a back which is able to bear something; and in truth we had need also of his being able to walk, and for this reason he received also the faculty of making use of phantasies, for otherwise he would not have been able to walk. And here then the matter stopped. For if he had also received the faculty of comprehending the use of phantasies, it is plain that consistently with reason he would not then have been subjected to us, nor would he have done us these services, but he would have been equal to us and like to us.³⁹

This notion of the achievement of the moral life through the proper control of our phantasies is emphasized again and again.

Now reason, for what purpose has it been given by nature? For the right use of phantasies. What is it then itself? A system (combination) of certain phantasies. So by its nature it has the faculty of contemplating itself also . . . it is the chief and the first work of a philosopher to examine phantasies, and to distinguish them, and to admit none without examination.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Ibid.* The translation is mine.

³⁷ 1. 18, in Long, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³⁸ *Ench.*, 1. 1, in Long, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

³⁹ *Diss.*, 2. 8, in Long, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1. 20, in Long, *op. cit.*, p. 64. See also 2. 22, and 3. 22.

For Epictetus the formula for the good life is the supremacy of reason over our mental impressions, the use of our phantasies (ἡ χρῆσις τῶν φαντασιῶν). It must be noted, however, that nowhere does he speak of the 'phantasy' as a power of the mind; there is no theory of phantasy as a mode of the mind's operation, mainly because Epictetus, unlike Zeno and Chrysippus, was not interested in descriptive psychology. In consequence his phrasing often indicates that he ignored vital distinctions. For instance, he uses *φαντασίαι* where other Stoics would have used *φαντάσματα*, and for him 'phantasies,' 'opinions,' and 'impressions' are evidently synonymous. There is again the obscuring of hard-won distinctions, and the consequent loss for the constructive theory of phantasy. But, despite the unphilosophical character of the utterances, a tradition was here being established, a way of regarding phantasies, if not the phantasy, quite as important for the history of psychology as the subtle views of Plato or the keen analyses of Aristotle.

To this insistence upon the supremacy of reason over our phantasies he added certain practical suggestions, perhaps derived from the Aristotelian ethics. In 2. 18, a chapter entitled, *How we should struggle against phantasies*, he advocates an Aristotelian precept: 'If you would make anything a habit, do it; if you would not make it a habit, do not do it, but accustom yourself to do something else in place of it.'⁴¹ According to this principle, when a lascivious phantasy presents itself, the Stoic, under the control of reason, should resort to expiations, and the society of noble and just men, noting, for instance, how Socrates was master of himself.

By placing these objects on the other side you will conquer the phantasy: you will not be drawn away by it. But in the first place be not hurried away by the rapidity of the phantasy, but say, Phantasies, wait for me a little: let me see who you are, and what you are about: let me put you to the test. And then do not allow the phantasy to lead you on and draw lively pictures of the things which will follow; for if you do, it will carry you off wherever it pleases. But rather bring in to oppose it some other beautiful and noble phantasy and cast out this base phantasy. . . . This is the true athlete, the man who exercises himself against such phantasies. . . . For what is a greater storm than that which comes from phantasies which are violent and drive away the reason? For the storm itself, what else is it but a phantasy? For take away the fear of death, and

⁴¹ 2. 18, in Long, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

suppose as many thunders and lightnings as you please, and you will know what calm and serenity there is in the ruling faculty.⁴²

If we say that the history of imagination is the account of the process by which rightful recognition was given to that function of the mind in virtue of which we have pictures, then we may say that this history is to be, in part, a struggle against the moral program of Stoicism. Nowhere better than in Epictetus may we study the deep prejudice against which 'phantasy' had to contend. It is true, indeed, that there are in Epictetus hints of a constructive view: he suggests substituting noble phantasies for ignoble ones as a proper means of regulating conduct; but the assumption of Stoicism is that most phantasies are of the 'acataleptic' type, not capable of scrutiny by reason. When reason is the criterion, as we shall see, both of truth and of conduct, imagination has usually suffered. It is a long road to the recognition of the truth that imagination is reason in her most exalted mood.

Plutarch (46?-120?) we shall consider, not as the founder of Neoplatonism, as he has sometimes been called, or as a Platonist, but as an eclectic, whose interest in 'phantasy,' aside from his criticism of Stoic views, is mainly an interest in the Platonic view of inspiration. In his interpretation of the view of the *Timaeus* one is immediately aware of the familiar dualism of the Platonic psychology, involving understanding in the rational soul, and phantasy in the irrational. Far from being interested in establishing a connection between them, he writes: 'They usually say, I think, that a sober man's understanding apprehends things right and judges well; the sense of one quite drunk is weak and enfeebled; but of them that are half drunk the phantasy [τὸ φανταστικόν] is vigorous and the understanding [τὸ λογιστικόν] weakened, and therefore, following their own phantasies, they judge, but judge ill.'⁴³ Here he is interested, like his opponents, the Stoics, in showing what happens in human judgments when phantasy is not properly restrained by reason. Both Stoicism and Platonism were intent upon the contrast

⁴² Long, *op. cit.*, p. 161. See also *Diss.*, 3. 8: *How we must exercise ourselves against phantasies*. For the reproduction of the view of Epictetus see Aulus Gellius, *op. cit.* 2. 259 (*Noct. Att.*, 19. 1).

⁴³ *Symp.*, 3. 7, in *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia*, ed. by G. N. Bernardakis, 7 vols., Lipsiae, 1888-1896, 4. 128, in *Plutarch's Morals*, tr. by several hands: ed. by W. W. Goodwin, 5 vols., Boston, 1871, 3. 281. I substitute 'phantasy' for the translator's 'fancy' and 'imagination.'

of phantasy and reason. This is also the tendency in Plutarch's discussion of the Platonic contrast of the principles of unity and diversity. Mind is concerned with unity, the judgment of universals, sense with the judgment of particulars, with diversity. Reason participates in both, being intellect if concerned with the universal, opinion if concerned with the particular. In its connection with the latter, and then only, it makes use of phantasy and memory. For the principle of unity phantasy is a species of memory; for the principle of diversity it helps one to connect the particular with the general.⁴⁴ Interpreting this quotation from a commentary on the *Timaeus* in the light of utterances to be considered later, one may say that for the purpose of that part of our mental equipment which affords a knowledge of phenomena the phantasy serves as a connecting link between the general and the particular, while in the service of our highest capacities for knowing universal truths this phantasy is a kind of memory.

Following Plato he asserted that God rules human lives through his power over phantasy; he produces phantasies which serve to correct vice. 'God only presents the visions, and kindles in the soul a light to discover future events, which is called divine inspiration.'⁴⁵ This enthusiasm, or condition for divination or prophecy, is not, as with demons, a process possible only apart from the body; but it takes place through the body when the necessary purification of the body has been effected. It is then that phantasy may stand in relation to the future as memory to the past. In memory we are not preserving the past, but, rather, arresting for a time what is now past, giving to it, as it were, a phantasy and a being. If this be possible in respect to the past, why not also in respect to the future, in dreams, or at times of sacrifice and worship?⁴⁶ Such a state comes

⁴⁴ *Epitome libri de animae procreatione in Timaeo*, 24, in *Moralia*, *op. cit.*, 6. 174. I add the translation from Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 2. 354, in itself somewhat unintelligible: 'Judgment has two principles,—understanding [νοῦν] from the Same, to judge of things in general, and sense from the Other, to judge of things in particular. Reason [λόγος] is a mixture of both, becoming intellect [νόησις] in reference to things intelligible, and opinion in things subject to sense; making use of the interdisposed organs of phantasy [φαντασίαις] and memory, of which these in the Same produce the Other, and those in the Other make the Same. . . . As for phantasy, being a connection of opinion with sense, the Same has placed it in the memory; and the Other moves it again in the difference between past and present, touching at the same time upon diversity and identity.'

⁴⁵ *De Pyth. Orac.*, 7, in *Moralia*, *op. cit.*, 3. 35; in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 3. 75.

⁴⁶ *De Defectu Orac.*, 38 ff., in *ibid.*, 3. 122 ff.; in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 4. 49.

about when the body has a proper temperature, or when the rational soul, released from its present concerns, joins with the irrational and phantastic part to think of and to represent what is to come. For in this process there are really two moments: one irrational, in which the soul images the future; and one rational, in which the phantasy, while constituting the basis for vision, is under the supervision of reason. The power of divining is, in itself, so far as any rational content is concerned, like a blank piece of paper. Upon this the divinely inspired phantasy may write. Of its utterances, however, reason must judge.⁴⁷

This power of vision the phantasy possesses only when it is not busied with the present. From the present it can be withdrawn only by enthusiasm, which in turn depends upon a right condition of the body. This is the state holy and divine, a breath through air, or the water of a spring which opens up the pores, making possible phantasies of the future.⁴⁸ Earth, sending up peculiar exhalations, transports the soul with divine fury, and gives it the faculty of creating phantasies of the future. But this phantastic nature is especially susceptible to change caused by physical changes, as in the melancholy. It is only when the phantastic and prophetic part has a temperature suitable to that of the Divine spirit that the prophet has enthusiasm.⁴⁹

This is the only attempt before the Neoplatonists to reproduce the theory of vision of the *Timaeus*. It is significant for the subsequent history of the term that Plutarch was led to emphasize the connection of phantasy with the irrational soul, and its dependence upon the condition of the body. He served to connect 'phantasy' with the theory of the humors. His chief importance, however, aside from his preservation of Stoic views which he contradicted, lies in his popular exposition of the Platonic view of phantasy as a capacity for vision.

The Hermetic writings (probably third century A.D.⁵⁰) are also important documents in the study of Platonic and Stoic traditions.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 4. 50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 4. 52

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-1, in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 4. 62.

⁵⁰ Walter Scott, *Hermetica*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1924, p. 8, writes: "The external evidence . . . proves that in A.D. 207-13 some *Hermetica* of the same character as ours were already in existence and accessible to Christian readers; and that in or about A.D. 310 most, if not all, of the extant *Hermetica* were in existence, as

In this collection of half-philosophical, half-theological fragments, long attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, but now generally regarded as the work of a group of men uniting Greek philosophy with Egyptian religion, one may study the effect of a literal interpretation of the Dialogues, especially the *Timaeus*:

God is ever-existent; and he makes manifest all else, but he himself is hidden, because he is ever-existent. He manifests all things, but is not manifested. He himself is not brought into being in phantasy, yet presents all else in phantasy. For a phantasy is only of that which has come into being. For phantasy is nothing else but a coming into being. It is evident, then, that He alone who has not come into being cannot be grasped by the phantasy. If he cannot be grasped by the phantasy, then he is not manifest. But He presents everything in phantasies, and thus manifests himself through all and in all.⁵¹

It is the familiar Platonic doctrine that God, Pure Being, is not an object of phantasy, the instrument of knowledge in the universe of phenomena; but He finds it necessary to communicate truth in terms of phantasy, tempering heavenly wisdom to human understanding. This view is confirmed by a passage from the fragments collected by Stobaeus, wherein the *Timaeus* and the Stoic doctrine of illusion are the probable sources:

All things on earth then, my son, are unreal; but some of them,—not all, but some few only,—are copies of reality. The rest are illusion and deceit, my son; for they consist of mere phantasy. When the phantasy flows in from above, it becomes an imitation of reality. But apart from the working of power from above, it remains an illusion; just as a painted portrait presents to us in appearance the body of the man we see in it, but is not itself a human body.⁵²

In so far, then, as there is change, there is phantasy. 'Everything that changes is illusory, because it does not stay in the state in which

well as many others that have perished.' For the influence of the Hermetic writings see Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-111, and G. R. S. Mead, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, 3 vols., London and Benares, 1906, I. 17-46. The former is the more scholarly work.

⁵¹ I have followed Scott's translation (*op. cit.*, pp. 157-159) only in part. The Greek runs: πάντα οὖν φανερώων, αὐτὸς οὐ φανερούνται, οὐκ αὐτὸς γεννώμενος ἐν φαντασίᾳ, πάντα φαντασιῶν. ἡ γὰρ φαντασία μόνων τῶν γεννητῶν ἐστίν. οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ φαντασία ἢ γένεσις. ὁ δὲ εἰς ἀγέννητος ὢν δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἀφαντασιαστος εἰ δὲ ἀφαντασιαστος, καὶ ἀφανής. τὰ δὲ πάντα φαντασιῶν, διὰ πάντων φαίνεται, καὶ ἐν πᾶσι. See also *Stobaei Hermetica*, in Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 380-1: 'To conceive God is difficult. . . . For it is not easy for that which is imperfect to apprehend that which is perfect. . . . The one is real; the other is but shadowed forth by sense-picturing [ἐπὶ φαντασίας].'

⁵² Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 383. I substitute 'phantasy' for 'appearance.'

it is, but presents phantasies that vary.' This is the familiar Platonic dualism, which, without its later modifications, summarily condemns phantasy to a world which is called unreal. Sometimes the notion assumes the shape in which it is usually found in Stoicism:

Man is not real, but only a phantasy. We ought then to call men phantasies, my son, if we name them rightly. We ought to call a child 'the phantasy of a child,' and a youth 'the phantasy of a youth.'⁵³

Whether this shows the influence of the Academy or of the Stoa, the result is the same; and when one takes into account the fact that the Hermetic writings are one of the important means by which Greek thought came to the attention of the early Christian church,⁵⁴ it is easy to understand why the early church, and especially early mysticism, had no constructive theory of phantasy. There is much in Christian literature, and notably in the letters of Paul, which made it easy to accept the contrast between phantasy and reality. A Christian theology ready to accept the philosophical implication of the first chapter of John's Gospel and Paul's persistent contrast of the flesh and the spirit, must have found congenial material in the Hermetic writings wherein God is synonymous with reality, and phantasy with the universe of not-being. It is true that these writings show acquaintance with the doctrine of the *Timaeus* that some phantasies are God-given; but it is more significant that nowhere in these Hermetic fragments is there evidence that the Platonic notion of divinely inspired dreams presented directly to human phantasy was understood or explained, and there is, on the other hand, constant emphasis upon the unreality of the world with which phantasy was primarily concerned. This was to be a part of the heritage of early Christian thought: a philosophy, probably primarily Platonic, with Stoicism as an important intermediary, which was constantly to emphasize the unreality and illusoriness of human phantasy.

This depreciation of phantasy in early Christian thought is perhaps most apparent in the spurious *Recognitions of Clement* (early third century),⁵⁵ an important document in the history of

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ See Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁵⁵ Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, 1. 1277 ff.; tr. in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Roberts and Donaldson, 10 vols., New York, 1903-7, 8. 114-5. The *Recognitions* were written before 231 A.D. when Origen quotes them, and probably not before 211 A.D., the date of an event referred to in the work. The Greek original is lost, and we have only the Latin translation of Rufinus of Aquileia (d. 410 A.D.).

Docetism. A kind of Christian theology which regarded the facts in the life of Christ as illusions would have found congenial material in the Hermetic writings, and might well have employed the term 'phantasy' constantly in talking about these illusions. It is an attitude consistent with this which appears in the attack of Jewish Christians in the *Recognitions*, Book II, upon Paul, under the name of Simon Magus. In the Dialogue, Peter, the apostle of the true faith, is insisting in opposition to his tempter, Simon Magus, that there can be no new God, for he cannot be apprehended by the five senses. Simon thereupon asks him whether he has ever used his imagination to conceive of regions and islands which have no existence in reality. If so, he can imagine a region beyond and outside of this world, where there is no heaven and earth, and no darkness. One is tempted to add in passing that the view attributed to him is quite out of harmony with sentiments expressed in his letters. Peter humorously replies by recounting an imaginative experience, a day dream, while fishing: he was once so absorbed that he did not feel a fish 'adhering to his line' while his mind eagerly ran through his beloved Jerusalem, and also attributed to Caesarea, which he had never visited, virtues which it did not possess. Andrew, his brother, awakened him from his reverie, asking him whether he was out of his senses. He replied that he was only mentally gazing on the beloved Jerusalem, and at the same time on Caesarea. Andrew, in rebuking him for his play of phantasy, gives the reader an early version of what was to be a typical attitude:

'Give over,' says he, 'O Peter. What is it that you are doing? For those who are beginning to be possessed with a demon, or to be disturbed in their minds, begin in this way. They are first carried away by fancies (*per phantasias*) to some pleasant and delightful things, then they are poured out in vain and fond motions towards things which have no existence. Now this happens from a certain disease of mind, by reason of which they see not the things that are, but long to bring to their sight those which are not. But thus it happens also to those who are suffering phrenzy, and seem to themselves to see many images, because their soul, being torn and withdrawn from its place by excess of cold or of heat, suffers a failure of its natural service. But those also who are in distress through thirst, when they fall asleep, seem to themselves to see rivers and fountains, and to drink; but this befalls them through being distressed by the dryness of the unmoistened body. Wherefore it is certain that this occurs through some ailment either of the soul or body.'⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

Peter, declaring complete sympathy with his brother's view, espouses, in opposition to Simon Magus, a doctrine of phantasy which, to his mind, completely destroys the bases of his tempter's belief in other gods:

In short, that you may receive the faith of the matter; concerning Jerusalem which I had often seen, I told my brother what places and what gatherings of people I had seemed to myself to see. But also concerning Caesarea, which I had never seen, I nevertheless contended that it was such as I had conceived it in my mind and thought. But when I came hither, and saw nothing at all like to those things which I had seen in phantasy, I blamed myself, and observed distinctly, that I had assigned to it gates, and walls, and buildings from others which I had seen, taking the likeness in reality from others. Nor indeed can anyone imagine (*cogitari*) anything new, and of which no form has ever existed. For even if anyone should fashion from his imagination (*ex sua cogitatione*) bulls with five heads, he only forms them with five heads out of those which he has seen with one head. And you therefore, now, if truly you seem to yourself to perceive anything with your thought, and to look above the heavens there is no doubt but that you imagine them from those things which you see, placed as you are upon the earth. But if you think that there is easy access for your mind above the heavens, and that you are able to conceive the things that are there, and to apprehend knowledge of that immense light, I think that for him who can comprehend these things, it were easier to throw his sense, which knows how to ascend thither, into the heart and breast of some one of us who stand by, and to tell what thoughts he is cherishing in his breast. If therefore you can declare the thoughts of the heart of any one of us who is not pre-engaged in your favour, we shall perhaps be able to believe you, that you are able to know those things that are above the heavens, although these are much loftier.⁸⁷

The conception of 'phantasy' here may be called popular rather than highly philosophical; but it is easy to see that there is throughout a basis in Greek dualism. The phantasy, concerned with sensible experience, cannot ascend to the supra-sensible world. It is, moreover, a power of the mind to be distrusted, since its liveliest activities are often associated with abnormal states, both mental and physical. Since the passage is important in the interpretation of other Christian views, it is also to be noted that here the greatest freedom of phantasy lies in recombining the materials furnished by experience, imagining the bull with five heads from having seen a bull with one head. But when one imagines a Caesarea which one

has never seen on the analogy of a Jerusalem which one has seen, one is likely, for instance, to conceive of a wall and gates which do not exist in reality. It is the old question of a criterion, of a means of ascertaining the correspondence of the image to reality. It is also to be noted that for the writer *phantasiae* and *cogitationes* are synonymous. The *Recognitions*, we shall see later, is no unimportant document in tracing the transition from Greek philosophy to popular conceptions of the Middle Ages.⁵⁸

We have attempted in this chapter to trace the fortunes of *φαντασία* in Greek philosophy from the death of Aristotle to the Hermetic writings and the *Recognitions*, in the second and third centuries of the Christian era. In this survey of approximately six centuries we have tried to estimate the influence of the views found in the four major Greek philosophies: Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean. Of these the Platonism of the first and second Academy seemingly added nothing; and the records of the third Academy lead one to believe that there were no significant developments. The Peripatetic school discovered no new ideas; the real elaboration of the psychology of *De Anima* and *De Memoria* was to be the work of the Middle Ages. Epicureanism merely elaborated the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus. Stoicism alone developed the theory of phantasy, both in dialectic and ethics. The distinctions in dialectic were important developments, mainly of Aristotelian notions; but they were overshadowed by the ethical interest in the control of phantasy. All in all, the great constructive aspects of the views of Plato and Aristotle were neglected, while Platonism and Stoicism with their ethical bents combined to build up a tradition of the dangers of phantasy. The sympathetic interpretation by Plutarch of the *Timaeus* and the Stoic interpretation of Aristotelian distinctions in psychology were insufficient to overcome the prejudices created by semi-scepticism of the Old Academy, the materialism both of the Peripatetics and the Epicureans, with their practical identification of phantasy with sensation, and the extreme dualism of the Hermetic writings. Although both Plato and Aristotle had a high place for *φαντασία*, the views of both materialist and idealist tended to depreciate the power, the one by identifying it with sensations and impressions, the other, either by denying the

⁵⁸ *Vide infra*, p. 209.

reality of its creations, or by insisting upon its condemnation as a function concerned only with a lower, unideal realm.

The preoccupation of the philosophy of the time probably had much to do with this depreciation. The two main interests, we have already said, were the establishing of a criterion in the field of knowledge, and the determining of the *summum bonum* in the field of ethics. Although Plato, Aristotle, and the greater Stoics recognized the essential rôle of phantasy in both fields, the practical result of six centuries of Greek philosophy after Aristotle was to deny that phantasy was a lofty type of thought, a means to truth, and a noble incentive to right conduct, 'the great instrument of moral improvement.' The Stoics alone made additions in the field of psychology, and they alone, of the four great schools of thought mentioned aesthetic in the discussion of phantasy and then only to distinguish between an 'artistic' and a 'non-artistic' phantasy. To study the development of the term in the theory of fine art we must turn to distant fields.

CHAPTER V

THE THEORY OF ART

Quintilian, Longinus, and Philostratus

It is not surprising that in Greek and Latin criticism there are few references to *φαντασία*. Although we conclude from the testimony of Quintilian and Longinus, presently to be considered, that the term was frequently used in ancient rhetoric and poetic, it is to be doubted that there was any theory such as that of the Dialogues, or such as might have been developed through an application of the Aristotelian psychology. This is probably due, first, to Aristotle's objection to the Platonic conception of phantasy in fine art, and, second, to the preoccupation of post-Aristotelian philosophy with dialectical and ethical problems. Although one of these schools may have influenced the aesthetic concept, we must also be alive to the effect of popular usage, with its comparative indifference to careful analysis and fine distinctions. This is not to suggest, however, that the utterances which we shall consider are not significant for later theory.

It is to the rhetoricians of the first century A.D. that we turn for notable instances of the application of *φαντασία* to literary problems. In estimating the importance of these utterances one must keep in mind the relation of rhetoric to the problems of education, and the gradual merging in the first centuries of our era of the rhetorical and poetic traditions. What they said about phantasy in treatises which belong primarily to the rhetorical tradition is quite as important for poetic theory as comparable utterances in treatises specifically concerned with the art of poetry.¹

In a passage in which Quintilian (35?-100? A.D.) is urging the familiar precept of the teachers of rhetoric, familiar in the Horatian *si vis flere*, he asks, 'But how are we to generate these emotions in ourselves, since emotion is not in our own power?' The explanation

¹ For the importance of Quintilian see F. H. Colson, *M. Fabii Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae, Liber I*, Cambridge, 1924, pp. xliii-lxxxix. For the influence of Longinus see W. Rhys Roberts, *Longinus on the Sublime*, Second edition, Cambridge, 1907, pp. 247-261. For the bearing of rhetoric upon poetic see, in general, C. S. Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*, New York, 1924.

indicates a popular tradition both in Greek and Latin of which we have too little knowledge:

There are certain experiences which the Greeks call *φαντασται*, and the Romans *visions*, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes. It is the man who is really sensitive to such impressions who will have the greatest power over the emotions. Some writers describe the possessor of this power of vivid imagination, whereby things, words and actions are presented in the most realistic manner, by the Greek word *εἰφαντασιώτης*; and it is a power which all may readily acquire if they will. When the mind is unoccupied or is absorbed by fantastic hopes or day-dreams, we are haunted by these visions of which I am speaking to such an extent that we imagine that we are travelling abroad, crossing the sea, fighting, addressing the people, or enjoying the use of wealth which we do not actually possess, and seem to ourselves not to be dreaming but acting. Surely, then, it may be possible to turn this form of hallucination to some profit. I am complaining that a man has been murdered. Shall I not bring before my eyes all the circumstances. . . .

From such impressions arises that *ἐνέργεια* which Cicero calls *illumination* and *actuality*, which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence. Is it not from visions such as these that Vergil was inspired to write—

‘Sudden her fingers let the shuttle fall
And all the thread was spilled.’²

This view is emphasized in a later book:

Consequently those vivid conceptions of which I spoke and which, as I remarked, are called *φαντασται*, . . . must be kept clearly before our eyes and admitted to our hearts: for it is feeling and force of imagination [*vis mentis*] that make us eloquent.³

² *Institutio Oratoria*, 6. 2. 29–32, in *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian* with an English translation by H. E. Butler, 4 vols., London, 1921–2, 2. 433–435. The Latin of the first sentence reads: ‘Quas *φανταστας* Graeci vocant, nos sane visiones appellemus, per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo, ut eas cernere ac praesentes habere videamur.’ See also 8.3.88, where force is said to be exhibited in *δελωσις*, *φαντασία*, in concipiendis visionibus, *ἔκθερασία*, *ἐκτέρεγασια*, and *ἐνέργεια*. This is further evidence that *φαντασία* was a familiar rhetorical term.

³ *Inst. Orat.*, 10. 7. 15, in Butler, *op. cit.*, 4. 141. See also 12. 10. 6, where Theon of Samos is noted among artists for ‘concipiendis visionibus, quam *φανταστας* vocant.’ See also A. Gellius, *Noct. Attic.*, XIX, 1: ‘Visa animi, quas *φανταστας* philosophi appellant.’

In these two passages Quintilian indicates the existence of a critical concept of *φαντασία* in the first century A.D. of which we have practically no documents. He implies that 'phantasy' is a familiar term, at least in rhetoric, when he remarks that some writers refer to the man of vivid imagination as *εἰς φαντασίωτος*. His statement that *φαντασῆαι* and *visiones* are synonymous suggests Lucretius' use of *visiones* in his Atomistic account of images in Book IV;⁴ but it does not necessarily point to an Epicurean source of the tradition which Quintilian exemplifies. It is to be observed, however, that it is a conception of phantasy which would have its ultimate source in an empirical psychology, Epicurean or Aristotelian, or perhaps Stoic, but not Platonic. The Platonic view which might have resulted in an early tradition of inspiration in terms of 'phantasy' has obviously given way to a view which springs from a psychology which derives all phantasies directly from sensations. It is an ordinary power of reverie, put to practical use in oratory. It is also a capacity which may be readily acquired. The connection between this power and emotion is also well established, as in the descriptive psychology of *De Anima* and the Stoic views derived from it. It may well reflect popular usage which developed from the Aristotelian or Stoic psychologies, without, however, any of the ethical implications of the latter.

Before attempting, however, further characterization of the passages, we shall turn to a comparable view of a great Greek critic, probably of the same century, who also belongs to the rhetorical tradition.⁵ The fifteenth chapter of *De Sublimitate*, in itself a complete essay on 'phantasy,' is also evidence of a view among the rhetoricians extant only in the two writers quoted. We must keep

⁴ Cf. Cicero, *Acad.*, ed. Reid, *op. cit.*, I. 40 (151) and 2. 18 (195), where the Stoic *φαντασία* is Latin *visum*. See also the long note of Stephanus in Sextus, *op. cit.*, I. 333 ff. He writes: 'Graecam vocem *phantasiam* retinui, non quod nescirem quomodo eam vertat Cicero, sed ne quis in ambiguitate vocis Latinae falleretur. nam *visum*, quod Cicero *φαντασῆαν* reddit, alia quoque significare scimus. quum autem variis in locis interpretetur *visum*, alicubi tamen *visionem* etiam vertit in Lucullo, et ibidem ita scribit *de sensibus ipsis quaedam dixit nova, quas iunctos esse censuit e quadam quasi impulsione oblata extrinsecus, quam ille φαντασῆαν nos visum appellemus licet.*' He also quotes A. Gellius, *Noct. Attic.*, XI, 5: *vide supra*, p. 92 note 33.

⁵ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 16, after reviewing the evidence, concludes: 'And although the evidence is not absolutely conclusive, we must perforce admit that the balance inclines strongly in favour of the first century and against the third.' For the relation of *De Sublimitate* to Quintilian, see p. 12.

in mind the fact that the chapter in Longinus is obviously a part of his discussion of the second of five principal sources of sublimity enumerated in the eighth chapter, viz., vehement and inspired passion, which he had defined as, for the most part, an innate quality. Only the most significant passages are quoted; the entire chapter is important:

Images, [φαντασίαι] moreover, contribute greatly, my young friend, to dignity, elevation, and power as a pleader. In this sense some call them mental representations [εἰδωλοποιίας]. In a general way the name of *image* or *imagination* [φαντασία] is applied to every idea of the mind [ἐννόημα], in whatever form it presents itself, which gives birth to speech. But at the present day the word is predominantly used in cases where, carried away by enthusiasm and passion, you think you see what you describe, and you place it before the eyes of your hearers. 2. Further, you will be aware of the fact that an image has one purpose with the orators and another with the poets [ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρὰ ποιηταῖς], and that the design of the poetical image is enthralment, of the rhetorical—vivid description. Both, however, seek to stir the passions and the emotions.⁶

There follow striking illustrations from Homer and the tragic poets, especially Euripides. As in the *Institutes* the rhetorician has recourse to the poets for his illustrations. He concludes, however, with a passage which shows that his primary interest is in rhetoric:

But it is impossible to cite all the examples that present themselves. 8. It is no doubt true that those which are found in the poets contain, as I said, a tendency to exaggeration in the way of the fabulous and that they transcend in every way the credible, but in oratorical imagery [τῆς ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας] the best feature is always its reality and truth. Whenever the form of a speech is poetical and fabulous and breaks into every kind of impossibility, such digressions have a strange and alien air. For example, the clever orators forsooth of our day, like the tragedians, see Furies, and—*fine fellows* that they are—cannot even understand that Orestes when he cries

Unhand me!—of mine Haunting Fiends thou art—
Dost grip my waist to hurl me into hell!

has these fancies because he is mad. 9. What, then, can oratorical imagery effect? Well, it is able in many ways to infuse vehemence and passion into spoken words, while more particularly when it is combined with the argumentative passages it not only persuades the hearer but actually makes him its slave.⁷

⁶ Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 83 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

The language of his summary, where he seems to be bringing to a conclusion his discussion of the two innate qualities conducive to elevation, is important: 'It will be enough to have said thus much with regard to examples of the sublime in thought, when produced by greatness of soul, imitation, or imagery, [φαντασίας].'⁸ Chapter XVI immediately considers Diction, the third topic proposed in Chapter VIII. It is evident that greatness of soul, imitation, and phantasy are regarded as the three different means to vehement and inspired passion, an innate rather than an acquired quality leading to the sublime; no attempt is made to establish a relation between them. The collocation of 'imitation' and 'phantasy' is merely the result of the summary of the preceding seven chapters: no attempt is made to reunite them.

Plutarch was also familiar with this tradition:

Neither, as one was pleased to say, are poetical fancies [ποιητικαὶ φαντασίαι], by reason of their lively expressions [διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν], rightly called waking dreams; but the dialogues of persons enamored, discoursing with their absent loves, and dallying, embracing, and expostulating with them as if they were present, much rather deserve this name. For the sight seems to delineate other fancies in the water, that quickly glide away and slip out of the mind; whereas the imaginations of lovers, being as it were enamelled by fire, leave the images of things imprinted in the memory, moving, living, speaking, and remaining for a long time.⁹

The phrase, ποιητικαὶ φαντασίαι, immediately suggests the distinction in Longinus between the rhetorical and poetical phantasy, and is perhaps also connected with the φαντασίαι τεχνικαὶ of the Stoics.¹⁰ As in Quintilian and Longinus there is a close association of φαντασία and ἐνάργεια; but, whereas Longinus specifically says that ἐνάργεια is the effect of rhetorical phantasies only, Plutarch associates this 'vividness' with poetical phantasies. The closest parallel, however, is with a passage in Quintilian, who wrote: 'When the mind is unoccupied or is absorbed by fantastic hopes or day-dreams, we are haunted by these visions [phantasies] of which I am speaking. . . . ' Plutarch evidently objected to this association of artistic phantasies and day dreaming: the speeches

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁹ Plutarch, *Amat.*, in *Moralia*, ed. Bernard. *op. cit.*, 4. 425; tr. in Goodwin, *op. cit.*, 4. 280. See the comment of Lessing in *Laocoon*, Chapter xv, footnote at the beginning.

¹⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 91.

and actions of the lover in the absence of his mistress are much more worthy of the latter characterization. It is to be observed that Plutarch thus established, on grounds different from those of Plato, a connection between the poet, the lover, and imagination, just as Longinus established a similar connection between madness and poetry.¹¹ The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are recognized as 'of imagination all compact,' not as Plato had described them, but as Shakespeare was later to describe them. It was this rhetorical tradition of the force and vividness of simple reproductive phantasies in poetry and oratory which was to develop into the commonplace of Renaissance thought, of which the well known passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the most famous expression.

It is apparent that Longinus, Quintilian, and Plutarch have a common source, a rhetorical tradition in which *φαντασία* was frequently described as a capacity for the vivid presentation of images. It is essentially a function of the reproductive phantasy, minutely described by Aristotle, and thoroughly applied in the ethical realm by the Stoics. Longinus is also acquainted with a comprehensive notion, explicit in none of the philosophical systems described, that the term may be applied to every idea of the mind, in whatever form it presents itself, which gives birth to speech. This suggests, at least, a philosophical basis implicit in Platonism. All three writers also make much of the connection established in three major psychological traditions of phantasy and passion,—a connection, it may be added, which was seldom to be broken in subsequent theories. All of this may point to the fact that the main features of the treatment of the reproductive phantasy by the three great schools of psychology were common property, and specifically fruitful material in that day as in this for the teachers of oratory. Or this evidence may point to direct indebtedness to the theory of the Stoics, who had most consistently emphasized the connection of phantasy and passion. We know that Longinus was in other respects influenced by the Stoics.¹²

¹¹ *Vide supra*, p. 108.

¹² For the relation of the view of Longinus to that of the Stoics see Fr. Striller, *De Stoicorum studiis rhetoricis*, in *Breslauer Philol. Abh.*, 1. 2. 56 ff.; and B. Coblenz, *De libelli Περὶ Τρυφῆς auctore*, Argentorati, 1888, pp. 42-46. It is pointed out that the Stoics had defined *εὐνέημα* as *φαντασία διαβολᾶς* (Diog. Laer., vii. 45); that the notion of phantasy as giving birth to speech may be specifically Stoic (cf. Diog. Laer., vii. 49); that the distinction between poetical and rhetorical phantasy is probably Stoic (but little evidence is cited); that the Stoics had con-

It is interesting that both rhetoricians go to the poets for their examples of phantasy. Longinus, however, alone distinguishes between the rhetorical phantasy and the poetical: 'The design of the poetical image is enthrallment, of the rhetorical—vivid description.' Later he justifies the tendency to exaggeration in poetry, allowing the poetical phantasy to transcend the credible; but he insists that in oratory the best feature is always its reality and truth. Oratorical imagery has a sufficient function in infusing vehemence and passion into spoken words, without invading the poet's field where the phantasies may be, as in the *Orestes* of Euripides, the result of hallucination. This the orator is prone to forget. He succeeds best when he remembers that the great speakers such as Demosthenes and Hyperides use phantasies to best advantage to illuminate, to give force, to an argument. 'By a sort of natural law in all such matters we always attend to whatsoever possesses superior force; whence it is that we are drawn away from demonstration pure and simple to any startling image [*εἰς τὸ κατὰ φαντασίαν ἐκπληκτικόν*] within whose dazzling brilliancy the argument lies concealed.'¹³ It is noteworthy that here among the ancients the case against the confusion of poetic and rhetoric is tellingly put in terms of 'phantasy.' Subsequent objection to the confusion of the arts reveals no more succinct statement of the case against the rhetoricians tainted with Asianism than this insistence upon different rôles of the artistic phantasy in the two great arts of speech.¹⁴ Perhaps we have here a clue to the 'artistic phantasies' (*φαντασίαι τεχνικαί*) of the Stoics.

These views, we have seen, are comparatively simple accounts of phantasy as a reproductive rather than as a productive, or, in common language, creative function. We have already remarked the absence of any exposition of the views of the *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus* in which there is a conception of phantasy as poetic inspiration. But the theory of poetic imagination, after its unsympathetic reception

nected *φαντασία* and *ἐνέργεια* (cf. Sext., *adv. Math.*, vii. 203, 216, 257; and that the Stoics had made use of the example from Euripides, *Orest.*, 264 (cf. *op. cit.*, vii. 249). But it is also pointed out that this example had also been cited by Sextus in his exposition of Epicurean views of *εἰδῶλα* (*op. cit.*, viii. 63); that the Epicureans had also connected *φαντασία* and *εἰδωλοποιία* (cf. Sext., *adv. Math.*, vii. 203) as at the beginning of *De Sub.* xv; and that *ἐνέργεια* and *φαντασία* were also connected in Epicurean thought (cf. Sext., *adv. Math.*, vii. 216, 257. Again, it is important to make allowance for the peculiar phraseology of Sextus. The evidence for a definite Stoic source is not, on the whole, conclusive.

¹³ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

¹⁴ See Baldwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-223.

by Aristotle, was begun anew, partly in a reinterpretation of the view of the Dialogues, and partly, and perhaps more basically, in just such a view as one finds in Quintilian, Longinus, and Plutarch. It is in such a view of fancy or imagination that the critics of the Renaissance were first to be interested, and it was upon this basis, an understanding of the functions of the simple, reproductive imagination in fine art, that our theory of the creative imagination was eventually to be built. Of course, an understanding of the Platonic views was involved, and many other elements besides; but when critics, despite the authority of Aristotle, were convinced that 'phantasy' was essentially involved in the imitative arts, 'phantasy' was on its way to recognition as a creative function.

This will perhaps become more apparent as we turn to the *Life of Apollonius*, by Philostratus (c. 170-245 A.D.). Here 'phantasy' and 'imitation,' closely united in the thought of Plato, and deliberately dissociated by Aristotle, are again reunited in a most significant manner. We remember that Aristotle, in making the divorce, was intent upon idealizing the rôle of imitation: the artist imitates men as they ought to be. It is not to be supposed, however, that this high conception generally obtained, especially in popular usage. Damis, the friend of Apollonius, is represented, for instance, as asserting that painting is the art of mixing colors for the sake of imitation and to get the likeness of a dog, or a horse, or a man, or a ship.¹⁶ To this simple declaration of naturalism in terms of 'imitation' Apollonius replies: 'And the things which are seen in heaven, whenever the clouds are torn away from one another, I mean the centaurs and stag-antelopes, yes, and the wolves too, and the horses, what have you got to say about them? Are we not to regard them as works of imitation?' If so, then God is a painter who amuses himself by drawing pictures. If imitation is merely a physical matter, then God is reduced to an aimless painter amusing himself by making pictures in the sky. Philostratus, of course, is intent upon exposing the fallacy of a grossly material notion of imitation. But he is also interested in a constructive theory. The materials, he says, exist in the heavens quite by chance; it is the imitative mind which re-arranges these materials, conceives of them as animals. Imitation is not merely a matter of expression, of making a copy; it is also a

¹⁶ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, tr. by F. C. Conybeare, 2 vols., London, 1912, I. 173 (Book 2, Chap. 22).

kind of conception. "The mimetic art is twofold, and we may regard the one kind as an employment of the hands and mind in producing imitations, and declare that this is painting, whereas the other kind consists in making likenesses [*εἰκάζειν*] with the mind alone."¹⁸ Damis, quite missing the point of the argument, insists that the second is merely an incomplete form of the first. Apollonius, however, continues to insist upon the distinction between imitative conception and imitative expression or representation. 'Man owes his mimetic faculty to nature, but his power of painting to art.' Art, for Apollonius, is a capacity for representing the ideas which one has in virtue of having a power of imitation. Imitation is essentially a power of conception, of originating ideas which demand expression, i. e. physical imitation in art. Hence plastic art need not be confined, as in the view of Damis, to the use of color.

We must also concede the name of a painting to an outline drawn without any colour at all, and composed merely of shadow and light. For in such designs we see a resemblance, we see form and expression, and modesty and bravery, although they are altogether devoid of colour. . . . And for this reason I should say that those who look at works of painting and drawing require a mimetic faculty; for no one could appreciate or admire a picture of a horse or of a bull, unless he had formed an idea of the creature represented. Nor again could one admire a picture of Ajax, by the painter Timomachus, which represents him in a state of madness, unless one had conceived in one's mind first an idea or notion of Ajax, and had entertained the probability that after killing the flocks in Troy he would sit down exhausted and meditate suicide.

Imitation here is not the function of representation through physical means, but the mind's capacity for calling up or creating likenesses of reality, for 'imagining,' as we commonly use the term. In other words, Apollonius means by 'imitation' what Quintilian and Longinus meant by 'phantasy,' save that the first was not interested in the emotional effect of these pictures, but in the fact that these mental states, and not their expression, constituted the imitation.

This will furnish the setting for another striking passage in which 'imitation,' already defined as a power of creating likenesses in the mind, is contrasted with 'phantasy.' Here Apollonius is criticizing, not the view of his friend, but the religious art of the Egyptians. Here is represented, perhaps better than in any other passage in Greek literature, the essential conflict between Egyptian symbolism and

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, I. 175-7.

the realism inherent in Greek religious art. Despite Aristotle's attempt to idealize imitative art, it is apparent that the imitative standard led in religious art to anthropomorphism; Aphrodite and Apollo represented ideals of physical perfection, and gods were made in the image of man. A religion which embodied its ideals in such beautiful and significant forms could hardly have a sympathetic understanding of the religious art of the Egyptians, whose shrines, in the words of Apollonius, 'seem to have been erected in honour rather of irrational animals than of God.'¹⁷ He evidently did not see,—or did not wish to see,—the significance of religious symbolism. He refers to the beautiful images of Greek art, of Zeus and of Athena, as in striking contrast. Thereupon his Egyptian friend asks with fine sarcasm:

'Your artists, then, like Phidias and like Praxiteles, went up, I suppose, to heaven and took a copy of the forms of the Gods, and then reproduced these by their art, or was there any other influence which presided over and guided their moulding?'

The Egyptian was an acute disputant: knowing the Greek reliance upon 'imitation,' he created a dilemma by asking how according to a theory of imitation an artist could arrive at an adequate conception of divinity. But Apollonius was resourceful. There was another influence, he replied, 'an influence pregnant with wisdom and genius.' 'What was that?' said the other, 'for I do not think you can adduce any except imitation.' The Egyptian, certain that his adversary must defend the theory of representative art, was ready to charge Greek religious artists either with sacrilege or with attempting the impossible; but he had not counted upon a Greek conception, probably less prevalent, which gave the necessary freedom to the artist. 'Phantasy,' said Apollonius, 'wrought these, an artist wiser than imitation. For imitation can only fashion what it has seen; but phantasy what it has never seen. For imitation can conceive of its ideal only on the analogy of reality [*πρὸς τὴν ἀναφοράν τοῦ ὄντος*], and many times fear [of the charge of impiety] restrains it. Phantasy, however, is never restrained, for without fear it marches to the realization of its conception.'¹⁸

Having thus asserted the freedom of Greek art through this contrast of 'imitation,' and 'phantasy,' he turns again upon the

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, 2. 77 (Book 6, Chap. 19).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* The translation is mine.

animals and birds of Egyptian religious art as capable of esteem, perhaps, as likenesses, but tending to lower the dignity of their gods. The Egyptian replies with some justice that Apollonius criticizes their religion very superficially; their artists, he says, 'fashion their forms as symbols of a profound inner meaning.' But this Apollonius passes off with a joke. There is something significant in the laugh of this Greek, when, confronted by the theory of symbolism which is the logical artistic expression of philosophical dualism as well as Egyptian religion, he refuses to treat it seriously. The reason was that this symbolism was at odds with the Greek passion for the beautiful. The whole case of Greek aesthetic against this form of art is finely summed up in a single sentence: 'The mind can more or less delineate or figure them [gods] to itself better than can any artist; but you have denied to the gods the privilege of beauty both to the outer eye and to inner suggestion.' Representative art, for the Greek, contained the element of beauty which symbolism lacked; and it was free art specifically through the freedom of the phantasy.

The significance of this view will best be seen if we do not assume that it is a unique assertion in early aesthetic of the creative power of the imagination.¹⁹ It is necessary to keep constantly in mind the fact that Apollonius is concerned, not with fine art in general, but with the plastic art concerned with image-making. Here the artist stood in danger of the charge of sacrilege: to have imitated this particular man or that particular animal would have constituted an impious kind of religious art. Imitation for Apollonius, evidently unacquainted with a view of *μίμησις* such as that of the *Poetics*, was a mental processes of making likenesses either of the external world or on the analogy of the external world. Art was the expression, the embodiment, of these imitations. When the Egyptian refers to 'imitation' as the prevailing Greek term, he assumes that his adversary will be unable to extricate himself from the dilemma of choosing between symbolism with its ugliness and the Greek imitation of beauty with its dangers of impious anthropomorphism. Apollonius, having recourse to a theory of phantasy as a power not bound to reproduce actual external reality, i.e. free to imagine, nowhere implies that phantasy conceives of the spiritual rather than the material. He merely implies that this image of the mind has

¹⁹ For a view stressing the uniqueness of this passage see G. Saintsbury, *A History of Criticism*, 3 vols., London, 1905-8, I. 118-120. See also B. Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic*, London, 1910, pp. 109-110.

not the plastic quality of a copy of external reality; it is not 'tied to the laws of matter.' The artist through the power of phantasy as opposed to imitation is free to make his own syntheses from the materials supplied by the senses; and the artistic product thus becomes a representation of an imaginative form existing in the mind. The Phidian Zeus, for Apollonius, is not the likeness of this or that man, but the creation of the free play of phantasy, an idealization which without anxiety he may embody in bronze or marble.

Thus in the romance of words 'phantasy,' belittled by Plato as a term of representative art, and consequently ignored by Aristotle in his poetic theory that he might satisfactorily idealize the function of imitation, comes to usurp the place of 'imitation' as a word capable of expressing the artist's power of idealization. This is the result of an application to the theory of fine art of functions of 'phantasy' generally recognized, and perhaps most adequately described by Aristotle himself. It is, in reality, the rejection of the Aristotelian theory of imitation, the recognition of the universalizing function of *μίμησις*, for a comparable theory of phantasy which had been growing in popularity since Aristotle, perhaps as the result of his views.²⁰

²⁰ For another interpretation see Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111. 'Stoisch ist der *φαντασία*-Begriff, der beweglich genug in der Seelenlehre der Stoa eingebaut war, um hier den Ueberschuss an Wahrheitsgehalt im Kunstwerk über das Modell hinaus zu erklären; stoischer Lehre entspricht es ferner, wenn die *φαντασία* sich aus allgemeiner seelischer Erfahrung in Natur und religiöser Übung nährt, und wohl nicht zufällig ist es wiederum der Bereich der gewaltigsten kosmischen Vorgänge, zu denen sich der erkennende Sinn—innerlich jenen verwand—aufschwingen muss, um Zeus zu schauen; stoisch ist schliesslich noch die Unerschütterlichkeit der *φαντασία* die aus sich heraus die wahre Form gesetzt hat und durch keinen sinnlichen Eindruck mehr beirrt wird. Die allgemeine Linie, auf der sich so der Begriff des Künstlerischen, soweit er an der Grundlage des stoischen Weltbildes festhielt, entwickelte, ist deutlich.' Schweitzer, failing to interpret the passage in its proper context, has succeeded in reading into it much of the conception of phantasy which he had ingeniously found in the Middle Stoa (see pp. 95 ff.). He has, for instance, ignored the fact that Philostratus is concerned with a problem of religious art, and this has led to an indefensible interpretation of *die Unerschütterlichkeit der φαντασία*.

CHAPTER VI

PLOTINUS

In tracing the influence of philosophical systems upon 'phantasy,' we cannot assume that Neoplatonism had a uniform effect. That would be to assume that all Neoplatonists had equal insight into the purposes and methods of Plato. Their beliefs, in the first place, are not the Platonism of the Academy. It is true that, like all developments of the teachings of Plato, Neoplatonism insisted upon the reality of immaterial ideas, and belittled the world of sensible experience; but these thinkers, on the whole, knew their great source too well and had too much insight to rest content with the old dualism which easily led to scepticism. Individual thinkers, in their attempt to solve the problem, went both to Aristotle and to the Stoics. Thus, in determining the sources of their views of phantasy we must take into account frequent eclecticism. Whereas the Academy seemed in the main to be interested in perpetuating what they thought to be Plato's *prima philosophia*, Neoplatonists were trying to erect upon the basis of the Dialogues a complete philosophical system. It is not surprising that none of them reproduced Plato's conception of 'phantasy.'

It is surprising, however, that their great interest in the *Timaeus* did not lead to a general appreciation of its theory of imaginative vision. Strangely enough, one, at least, seems to have had recourse to Aristotle to supplement the *Timaeus*, and others show familiarity with the description of *De Anima*. One, in his views of phantasy, seems close to scepticism, while others derived from their study of the Dialogues nothing of significance. It is not Neoplatonism as a school of thought which is important for the history of phantasy, but the opinions of individuals who in their contributions were eclectics.

Neoplatonists, with their insistence upon the unreality of the physical universe, would not be expected to attach importance to works of art or to the function of phantasy as described by Quintilian, Longinus, and Philostratus. With their inherent dualism they would find difficulty in establishing a complementary relation

between the spiritual and the material sufficient for a theory either of symbolism or of representative art. In a philosophy which belittled the phenomenal world the phantasy would hardly be looked upon as a lofty capacity of artistic representation.

Yet it was the first great Neoplatonist,¹ Plotinus (204–269), who was not only to inaugurate a new aesthetic, but in so doing was to make one of the most important contributions to the theory of phantasy. This he was able to do, in part through his understanding of the Dialogues, and, in part, through his eclecticism which led to a careful study of the Aristotelian psychology. For him, as for other students of Plato, the idea was something different from a generalization from sense-impressions. Matter was a mere appearance of size, a ‘phantasm of bulk.’ Phantasms were not means to truth, for truth was anterior to any material manifestation. The One was unchangeable and more real than anything which could be observed in the flux of phenomena. The first impulse of Plotinus, as for Neoplatonists generally, is to scorn phantasms. Had he been content with this position, Beauty for him would always have been an abstraction, never taking shape, never capable of concrete sensuous expression.

But Plotinus could no more rest here than could Plato. Making use of a notion which suggests the Aristotelian doctrine of ‘form,’ he asserts that the archetypal reality, the Idea, has the power of communicating its virtue to each lower sphere in keeping with the capacity of that sphere to receive. The relation of the lower to the higher he expresses in terms of ‘image’ and ‘idol’ (εἰκὼνα, εἰδῶλον), or sometimes ‘shadow’ (σκίαν). Being, the image of the One, is unknowable. Mind (νοῦς) or the cosmic mind (κόσμος νοητός) is the image of Being; the soul (ψύχη) is the image of Mind; and nature

¹ Ammonius Saccas (died c. 240 A.D.) and Numenius (2nd. cen. A.D.), traditional founders of Neoplatonism, have little importance for this study. Of the views of the former little is known. Porphyry (Stobaeus, *Ecl. Phys.*, ed. Heeren, 1. 52, tr. in *Plotinus: Complete Works*, tr. by K. S. Guthrie, 4 vols., Alpine, N. J. 1918, p. 1256) is authority for the statement that ‘Numenius, who teaches that the faculty of assent (or combining faculty) is capable of producing various operations, says that [phantasy] [τὸ φανταστικόν] is an accessory of this faculty, that it does not, however, constitute either an operation or function of it, but a consequence of it.’ This is quoted in contrast to Stoic views. See also K. S. Guthrie, *Numenius of Apamea*, London, 1917, pp. 52, 53:

‘Numenius, who says that the synthetic power (of the soul) is receptive to energies; but that its power of presentation [τὸ φανταστικόν] is a casual consequence [συνπτῶμα]; not its function or result, but a by-product.’

is the image of the soul. Finally, matter is merely a substratum, having no reality save it is informed.²

In this theory of emanation Plotinus is trying to avoid the awkward dualism by insisting that the lower is the image of the higher. In his attempt he ceases to be thoroughly Platonic when he insists upon successive emanations, perhaps here distorting the Aristotelian notion of 'form' by insisting upon a downward rather than upward progression. The resulting theory of art has little in common with the doctrine of imitation of the *Poetics*. For Plotinus the perfect form of art, the Beauty which alone is the object of Intelligence, existing only in the mind, is a greater and truer beauty than exists in any external object.³ Every creative principle is higher than the thing created. According to this view, not only is matter wholly unideal, but nature herself is less ideal than Mind. The material object becomes beautiful only 'by communicating in the thought that flows from the Divine.'⁴ The block of marble has no interest in itself; only as it is informed by the artist does it take on aesthetic significance. The Form, indeed, is not already in the material, but before it entered into the stone existed in the mind of the sculptor.⁵

Nature herself has no creative capacity, since she has no faculty which will enable her to conceive of the ideal; the Plotinian theory of art insists that art must transcend nature. Keeping in mind the substitution in Philostratus of 'phantasy' for 'imitation,' we can anticipate the drift of the argument when Plotinus asserts that, if art is only an imitation of nature, then it is also necessary to say that it is an imitation, not of nature herself, but the of ideal which nature endeavors to realize.⁶ Again a view of art based upon a

² This survey of Plotinian metaphysics owes something to Thomas Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, Second ed., Cambridge, 1919.

³ *Ennead*, 5. 8. 1, in *Plotini Opera Omnia*, ed. by F. Creuzer, 3 vols., Oxford, 1835; for translation see *Plotinos: Complete Works*, tr. by K. S. Guthrie, 4 vols., Alpine, N. J. 1918, 2. 551. Guthrie's translation, the only complete one, will be quoted hereafter, except where MacKenna's (see note 4) is available. Guthrie leaves much to be desired. There is a good German translation by Otto Kiefer: *Plotin, Enneaden*, 2 vols., Jena und Leipzig, 1905.

⁴ *Enn.*, 1. 6. 2, tr. in *Plotinus: the Ethical Treatises*, tr. by Stephen MacKenna, London, 1917, p. 80.

⁵ *Enn.*, 5. 8. 1; Guthrie, *loc. cit.*

⁶ See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 552: 'The arts independently create many things, and to the perfection of the object they add what is lacking, because they possess beauty in themselves. Phidias seems to have represented Jupiter without copying

philosophy essentially opposed to that of Aristotle substantiates the utterance of the *Poetics* that art imitates nature as it ought to be, that the business of art is to realize nature's uncompleted purposes. These artists, says Plotinus, make that which is beyond the bounds of nature. For, possessing the immutable Form of Beauty in the mind, they go forward where there is an omission in nature. Phidias made his Zeus, not through any model observable to sense, but representing what he would be if he were to appear to us. In this view, it is to be observed, it is not phantasy which gives the artist ability to transcend nature. Plotinus was evidently too well acquainted with the phraseology of the Dialogues to use 'phantasy' for a power of ideal conception; that for him would suggest imitation, image-making, and, in general, the lower world of the persistent dualism of the idealists.

If we would understand his attitude towards phantasy, we must take into account his repeated contrast of two kinds of beauty, with its attack upon imitation and image-making. 'Such then are the kinds of beauty,' he writes, 'which address themselves to the sensible part, beauties which are but images and as fleeting shadows which descend to matter, which embellish it, and in appearing there excite our admiration. As for the higher sort of beauty which it is not given to sensation to discover, but which Mind sees and names without the aid of organs of sense, it is needful to raise oneself higher in order to contemplate it, leaving sensation below.'⁷ This is obviously the Platonism of the *Symposium*, a view which he adheres to consistently throughout his writings, even to the distinction between music and the plastic, imitative arts.⁸ All of the latter, —painting, statuary, dancing, and pantomime,—deriving their materials from the world of sense, are unideal save as the forms, the conceptions in the human soul, may be called intelligible. This recognition of the possible ideality of the conceptions seems to be the one element which saves the imitative arts, apparently synonymous for Plotinus with the plastic arts, from utter condemnation. 'Image,' 'idol,' 'shadow,' and 'imitation' are synonymous terms denoting art connected with the lower world of sensation, and hence distinctly inferior to ideal Form. The Plotinian aesthetics, growing out of a

any sense-objects, conceiving him such as he would appear to us if he ever revealed himself to our eyes.'

⁷ *Enn.*, 1. 6. 3.

⁸ *Enn.*, 5. 9. 11, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

dualistic metaphysics, has thus little place for phantasy, concerned with sensible experience.

The psychology of Plotinus, with its trinity of Spirit, Soul, and Body, related to this metaphysical trinity of One, Spirit, and Soul, also left little place for phantasy. It was Spirit (*νόησις*) which brought man into communion with the One, a state of mystical intuition; and with this state a function of the lower soul, dealing with phenomena, would have no concern. Phantasy regarded as a means of knowledge of the external world is not a means to vision. It is in this belief that Plotinus writes:

The memory of intelligible things hinders her [the soul] from falling, that of terrestrial things makes her descend here below, and that of celestial things makes her dwell in heaven. In general, the soul is and becomes what she remembers. Indeed, to remember is to think or imagine; now, to imagine is not indeed to possess a thing, but to see it [and be affected by it]. If the soul see sense-things, by the very act of looking at them she somehow acquires some extension. . . . Placed and established on the confines of the sense and intelligible worlds, she may equally move towards either. In the intelligible world, the soul sees the Good by intelligence. . . . Between the soul and the Good, the intermediary is not the body, which could be no more than an obstacle; for if the bodies can ever serve as intermediaries, it would only be in the process of descending from the first principles to third rank entities. When the soul occupies herself with inferior objects, she possesses what she wished to possess conformably to her memory and phantasy. Consequently memory, even should it apply itself to the very best things, is not the best thing possible.⁹

Again he writes:

We do not perceive intelligible entities by imagination or reasoning, which itself is forced to draw its principles from elsewhere; it is by our faculty of contemplation, which alone enables us to speak of them while we are here below.¹⁰

'To see intelligible Being,' he writes at another point, 'and to contemplate that which is above the phantasies of the sense-objects, none of these must remain present to the mind.'¹¹ Clearly phantasy

⁹ *Enn.*, 4. 4. 3, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 445. I have substituted 'phantasy' for 'imagination' throughout quotations as the translation of *φαντασία*.

¹⁰ *Enn.*, 4. 4. 5, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 447. Plotinus writes *επισκοπή*, obviously synonymous with *φαντασία*.

¹¹ *Enn.*, 5. 5. 6, in *ibid.*, 2. 585.

is not a power of intuition; yet it was in connection with the characteristic doctrine of recollection, closely associated with Neoplatonic mysticism, that phantasy was to be described as an essential and comparatively noble function of the mind.

Plotinus objects quite as vigorously as Aristotle to the view that phantasy is concerned with quite material impressions, such as the 'idols' of the Epicureans. In a polemic against the Stoics he insists that phantasies are not configurations as it were in wax';¹² but, rather, one of a series of mental functions in an orderly whole quite as comprehensive as the scheme of *De Anima*. The Plotinian psychology, despite the metaphysical doctrine of emanation, describes mental functioning from the first impression to the highest activity of intellect; and in this account, reminding one often of Aristotle, phantasy is described as both the product of sensation and the basis of conceptual thought.¹³ Like Aristotle and some Stoics, and unlike Plato, he insists that phantasy itself is not a state of judgment, i. e. is not to be identified with opinion.¹⁴ Unlike Aristotle, however, Plotinus, consistently adhering to his belief in the transcendent character of the Idea as independent of matter, does not conceive of phantasy as essential to the higher processes of thought, as *φαντασία βουλευτική* or *λογιστική*, but, in his doctrine of emanation, asserts that the phantasm derives from something higher, and hence is not a means to thought but a weak expression of thought. It is thus a kind of memory-image of a higher type of mental activity. To understand this theory of the memory-image in the service of a doctrine of emanation, we must first turn to his descriptive psychology, unquestionably derived from Aristotle.

Phantasy is a capacity of the lower, passive soul conversant with matter and the world of sense. It depends upon sensation, and is consequently connected with the body. As a faculty of representation it is recognized as a source of our consciousness of our physical states;¹⁵ and, as a power capable of reflecting higher mental states, it is also connected with Mind. It participates in both mind and body. But this involved the awkward dualism from which Aristotle partially escaped through his doctrine of form. Phantasy must

¹² *Enn.*, 3. 6. 3. See, however, *supra*, p. 88 where the Stoics also object to the theory of Cleanthes. For a discussion of phantasy see W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2 vols., London, 1918, 1. 228-234.

¹³ *Enn.*, 4. 4. 28, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 482.

¹⁴ *Enn.*, 1. 1. 9.

¹⁵ *Enn.*, 4. 4. 28.

ever have its feet upon the ground. Because of its close connection with the passions, moreover, it so dominated life at times that the individual could not be said to be free. Here his view is plainly influenced by Stoic ethics:

By . . . 'phantasy' we mean the phantasy excited within us by the passions of the body; for it offers us different phantasies according as the body has need of food, of drink, or of sensual pleasures. Those who act according to the phantasies excited within them by divers qualities of the humors of the body are not wholly responsible for their actions. That is why depraved men, who usually act according to these phantasies, do not, according to us, perform actions that are free and voluntary. We ascribe free will only to him who, enfranchised from the passions of the body, performs acts determined solely by intelligence.¹⁶

Here Plotinus espouses the Stoic doctrine of our slavery through our phantasies in opposition to the Aristotelian declaration that man is master of his phantasies.¹⁷ Such a view of the relation of phantasy to passion, connected with the sharply accentuated dualism, would seem to leave little hope for a true evaluation.

His interpretation of the *Timaeus*, however, enables phantasy to come into its own. When a true harmony exists between soul and body, he says, then the body may be said to be illuminated by the soul.

When the Intellect is in upward orientation that (lower part of it) which contains (or, corresponds to) the life of the Soul, is, so to speak, flung down again and becomes like the reflection resting on the smooth and shining surface of a mirror; in this illustration, when the mirror is in place the image appears but, though the mirror be absent or out of gear, all that would have acted or produced an image still exists; so in the case of the Soul; when there is peace in that within us which is capable of reflecting the images of the Rational and Intellectual-Principles these images appear. Then, side by side with the primal knowledge of the activity of the Rational and the Intellectual-Principles, we have also as it were a sense-perception of their operation.

When, on the contrary, the mirror within is shattered through some disturbance of the harmony of the body, Reason and the Intellectual-Principle act unpictured: intellection is unattended by phantasy [*ἀνευ εἰδώλου ἢ διάνοια καὶ ὁ νοῦς νοεῖ καὶ ἀνευ φαντασίας ἢ νόησις τότε*].

In sum we may safely gather that while the Intellective-Act may be attended by phantasy, it is not to be confounded with it.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Enn.*, 6. 8. 3, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 3. 777.

¹⁷ *Vide supra*, p. 73 and p. 94.

¹⁸ *Enn.*, 1. 4. 10, in MacKenna, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 68.

This power of phantasy, clearly synonymous here with image-making, results in a consciousness of our mental states, dependent upon the harmony of mind and body. The phantasy images for the bodily man, the man of the passive soul, the higher intellectual states. It is, however, far from being a state of mystic contemplation in which the thinker and the object of thought become identical; that needs no power either of reason or phantasy. This rôle of phantasy, indeed, is not essential, but, rather, 'tends to blunt the activities upon which it is exercised.'¹⁹ The life which cannot be expressed in terms of sensation and phantasy is for the mystic the higher and the purer.

This first view of phantasy as a power of the lower soul capable of imaging, i. e. giving sensible expression to, thought, is essentially that of the mystic. He does not regard it as essential, and he deprecates its cultivation. Underlying this view, however, is an interest of a metaphysician and psychologist in phantasy which led Plotinus elsewhere to establish a very definite relation between the world of ideas and the world of things.

It is apparent to Plotinus that impulse and phantasy, pertaining to the lower 'aesthetic' soul, have reason situated over them in the brain that it may thus regulate the body through the organs of sense.²⁰ It is also apparent that sense and phantasy, impulse and appetite, are concerns of intellect. The mystic found a principle of reconciliation in the assertion that the harmonious relation of soul and body could result in a mental picture or phantasy of intellectual processes; but this did not solve the psychological problem of how such a harmony could be said to exist. Although a mystic could hardly be satisfied with the Aristotelian psychology, it was to Aristotle that Plotinus turned for his account of a mental power which, participating in both soul and body, could effect a union between the spiritual and the material. This view he sought to combine with the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence. Soul, he said, was capable of remembering its movements, and this means that it remembers, not bodily, but mental states. The body, in truth, is an impediment to memory, a kind of Lethe. Memory is distinctly an affair of the Soul.²¹ But we have both a rational and an irrational soul; and, if the soul remembers, there must be a capacity of memory

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰ *Enn.*, 4. 3. 23.

²¹ *Enn.*, 4. 3. 26.

for each. If, however, each soul has its separate power of memory, and the lower soul is said to be an image of the higher, the question arises: Is not this power of memory, then, in the lower soul, which remembers the objects of the higher soul as images, merely a power of sense; and are we not asserting that a sensitive power has a capacity of remembering mental states beyond its reach, i. e. states of intellect?²²

This seeming inconsistency in asserting that memory, an affair of the lower soul, can be conversant with higher intellectual states, may be explained by distinguishing carefully between perception and phantasy.²³ Perceptions and phantasies are different; the latter are distinctly bodiless mental states. Memory, questioned as too material to be concerned with immaterial realities, is a part, not of one's 'aesthetic,' perceptual, but of one's 'phantastic' nature.

²² *Enn.*, 4. 3. 25, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 429.

²³ *Enn.*, 4. 3. 29-31. I quote in Guthrie's translation (2. 436 ff.) the more important passages interpreted in the following pages: '(To solve all these difficulties) it may be stated that nothing hinders the admission that the actualization of the sensation produces in memory an image, and that the phantasy, which differs (from sensation), possesses the power of preserving and recalling these images. It is indeed phantasy in which sensation culminates; and when sensation ceases, phantasy preserves its representation. If then this power preserve the image of the absent object, it constitutes memory. . . . Memory of sense-objects therefore belongs to the phantasy. . . . What about intellectual conceptions? Are they also preserved by phantasy? If phantasy accompany every thought, and if later it, as it were, preserves its image, we should thus have the memory of the known object; otherwise some other solution will have to be sought. Perhaps reason, whose actualization always accompanies thought, has the function of receiving it and transmitting it to phantasy. Indeed, thought is indivisible, and so long as it is not evoked from the depths of intelligence, it remains as it were hidden within it. Reason develops it, and making it pass from the state of thought to that of image, spreads it out as it were in a mirror, for our phantasy. . . . If theory belong to phantasy, and if both the rational and irrational souls possess memory, we will have two kinds of phantasy (intellectual and sensual); and if both souls are separate, each of them will possess one kind of phantasy. The theory of two kinds of phantasy within us in the same principle would not account for there being two kinds of phantasy; and it would leave unsolved the question to which of them memory belongs. If memory belong to both kinds of phantasy, there will always be two kinds of phantasy—for it cannot be said that the memory of intelligible things belongs to the one, and that of sense-things to the other. . . . If then memory equally belong to both phantasies, what difference is there between them? Besides, why do we not notice this difference? Here is the cause. When both kinds of phantasy harmonize, they cooperate. . . . The most powerful dominates, and only a single image is produced within us. The weaker follows the stronger, as the feeble reflection of a powerful light. On the contrary, when both kinds of phantasy disagree and struggle, then only one of them manifests, and the other is entirely ignored.'

It is the phantastic nature of memory, enabling it to partake of the essence both of soul and body, which makes it possible for it to exercise this function of connecting the lower with the higher. If a person is capable of remembering not only his desires but also the physical objects of those desires, then one must affirm that there are two kinds of phantasy, one corresponding to the activities of the 'dianoetic' soul, the other to those of the 'aesthetic' nature. Such a power will apprehend both the objects of reason (*νοητικόν*) and the objects of sense (*αἰσθητικόν*).

It is easy to prove that the irrational soul remembers sensible objects: phantasy, the power through which one remembers, has its source in sensation, and hence one remembers, not the phenomenon, but its phantasm, and the power or remembrance depends upon the persistence of the phantasm. Such a power, one readily sees, will depend to a certain extent upon bodily states. Can the soul, however, be shown to have a similar power of remembering thoughts? Can one be said to remember a phantasm, i.e. a concrete representation, of ideas? Yes, he decides, for Reason has the power of exhibiting by means of a phantasm each idea, as it were in a mirror. Just as through phantasms the soul comes to know its lower perceptive states, so through phantasms one comes to know what the soul perceives rationally.

But Plotinus is conscious that the dualism has by no means been overcome: if memory is a matter of phantasy, and each soul remembers, then each soul will have its function of phantasy. The way out is by recognition of the fact that the lower, irrational soul is the image of the higher, and it is possible for a true harmony to be achieved. Under that condition, the two powers of phantasy not being separated, the more excellent prevails, and a single phantasm is produced, since the one follows the other like a shadow, and is subservient to it as a lesser to a greater light. When, however, this harmony is destroyed, each power of phantasy functions separately. Hence the higher phantasy does not tend to remember earthly affairs.

In this account the psychologist anxious to rid himself of the dualism which with Platonism he had inherited has won a victory over the mystic with his contempt for sensible experience. It is this sympathy with the Aristotelian point of view which also leads him to distinguish between phantasy and opinion, as between phantasy and sensation, instead of using the terms indiscriminately as indi-

cative of a world of illusions. Although he recognizes that opinion is a capacity of the rational soul for grasping ideas, and sensation merely an affair of the lower soul, he brings in his conception of two kinds of phantasy to bridge the gap: the higher phantasy is concerned with the presentation of opinion, the lower with the presentation of sensations.²⁴ The higher is a power giving concrete expression to thoughts; the lower a similar power of representing sensations. But opinion and phantasy are never identical. Rather, the relation between them is analogous to the relation between soul and matter: matter, sometimes an image or mirror of the soul, is not therefore the soul itself. Although we may call matter a 'phantasm of bulk,' it is not therefore magnitude or extension. So, too, phantasy, a reflection of opinion, is never, in consequence, to be identified with opinion or any other activity of the rational soul.²⁵

One leaves the psychology of Plotinus conscious that he has not succeeded in solving the problem presented by Plato. The apparent eclecticism, and especially the reliance upon Aristotelian and Stoic psychology, had been of little avail. The problem of distinguishing in views of the later Neoplatonists Platonic from Aristotelian and Stoic elements becomes, in consequence, more difficult.

This theory of two kinds of phantasy, the one concerned with opinions, the other with sensations, and in consequence with impulses and appetites, becomes the basis in his ethics of a classification of acts into moral and instinctive, as in *De Anima*.²⁶ Not only does he distinguish between phantasies leading to instinctive acts, and phantasies, or concrete representations, of those thoughts which influence the will, and hence result in moral acts; but, like Aristotle, he insists upon the freedom of the will on the ground that one has freedom over one's phantasies.²⁷ Quite in sympathy, however, with the view of the *Timaeus*, he urges that the highest morality consists

²⁴ *Enn.*, 3. 6. 4, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 357: 'Now it is to the soul that [phantasy belongs], both the primary phantasy that we call opinion, and the (secondary) phantasy that proceeds from the former; for the latter is no longer genuine opinion, but an inferior power, an obscure opinion, a confused phantasy which resembles the action characteristic of nature, and by which this power produces each thing, as we say, unimaginatively. Its resulting sense-agitation occurs within the body. To it relate trembling, palpitantion, paleness, and inability to speak.' Cf. *supra*, p. 70.

²⁵ *Enn.*, 3. 6. 15, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 377.

²⁶ *Enn.*, 3. 6. 4, and 4. 4. 28.

²⁷ See, however, *supra*, p. 123.

in freeing the soul, in so far as possible, from the body.²⁸ The purification of the passive soul would consist in part in freeing it from bad images. Phantasy must be kept from dragging the soul down. Thus a Platonic *prima philosophia* leads Plotinus, like the Stoics, to a fear of phantasy in the ethical realm.²⁹

There has been little in the views of Plotinus examined thus far to warrant the statement that in inaugurating a new aesthetic he was to make one of the most important contributions to the theory of phantasy. We have seen that his aesthetic is based upon a metaphysical principle of emanation in which the lower is regarded as the image of the higher; that this involves an attack upon the imitative or image-making arts, as in Plato; that in this attack he recognizes a power of ideal conception, to which he is unwilling to give, as did Apollonius, the name of phantasy, influenced probably by the Dialogues. We have also seen how this principle of emanation, constantly employing the concept of the image, resulted in a psychological view of two kinds of phantasy, a phantasy of the rational soul, and a phantasy of the appetitive and concupiscent soul. This will enable us to understand his most important contribution to the thought about *phantasia* in his view of the relation of man to nature. In his scheme of emanation Nature (*phúsis*), standing below the World-Soul (*ψύχη*), was regarded as an image of it, and took on significance only as it imaged, represented, the intellectual essence of this World-Soul. Hence Nature was not ideal, because it was but an image of that which was comparatively low in the series of emanations; between it and the One stood Mind and Soul.³⁰

Now the individual soul, participating also in this World-Soul, is more ideal than Nature and has a truer grasp of reality. The human soul, participating in this Soul, and, in consequence, being in immediate contact with Mind, is in a better position to realize the ideal in Nature than is Nature herself. It is true that Nature is

²⁸ *Enn.*, 3. 6. 5: to purify the soul means to raise her from the earthly to the intelligible, and this involves 'hindering her from consideration of these phantasms, and from the production of related states of passion.'

²⁹ See also *Enn.*, 6. 8. 3, and 4. 4. 17, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 463: 'Besides, as several forces dominate in us, our phantasy necessarily has representations that are various, transient, modified by each other, and hindering the movements and actions characteristic of each power of the soul. Thus, when lust arises in us, phantasy represents to us the desired object, warns us, and instructs us about the passion born of lust, and at the same time begs of us to listen to it, and to satisfy it.'

³⁰ See *Enn.*, 3. 8. 8.

higher than Matter, since the former is at least derived from Intelligence; but, even so, it has little significance, save as individual souls, informed from above, attach to it a meaning, are able to see in it the image of a higher Reason, the result of a creative activity.

But how is it, it may be asked, that Soul, and not Nature, is able to see and to know this element of Mind inherent in Nature? What is it that Nature lacks? The answer is at first surprising to one who has not seen all the implications of the views which we have analyzed. Plotinus asserts that Soul recognizes this intelligent element in Nature, and Nature herself cannot, *because Nature lacks a power of phantasy*.

Such is the condition of nature. She does not know, she only produces, blindly she transmits to matter the form she possesses, . . . Nature does not even phantasy: for the act of phantasying, inferior as it is to that of thinking, is nevertheless superior to that of impressing a form, as nature does it. Nature can neither grasp nor understand anything; while phantasy seizes the adventitious object and permits the one who is phantasying to know what he has experienced.³¹

This assertion of the superiority of the human soul to nature in virtue of the possession by the former of a power of creating pictures takes us naturally back to our point of departure, the Plotinian aesthetic, with its insistence that the Beauty which exists in the Mind is greater than that which exists in nature, because nature, the created thing, is less ideal than Mind, from which it emanated, and in which the individual mind participates. The block of marble as a part of nature has no beauty; but the beauty, before it entered into the stone, i.e. nature, existed in the mind of the sculptor.³² In our discussion of this important aesthetic principle we pointed out that, in departing from the Aristotelian theory of imitation, Plotinus had not chosen, as had Apollonius, to employ the term 'phantasy' for this idealizing function. But here, in a passage not concerned with aesthetic, phantasy is recognized as the specific human power which enables man to be superior to nature, to see in nature its inherent capacities.

We must be careful, of course, not to attach too great importance to what may be but unique phraseology. We must keep in mind

³¹ *Enn.*, 4. 4. 13, in Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 2. 459.

³² *Vide supra*, p. 119.

that Plotinus is not discussing an aesthetic principle, and perhaps never intended that this passage should be brought in to interpret his aesthetic. What he says about the relation of Mind to nature at one point, however, ought to have significance for the interpretation of other passages of similar content; and the fact that Plotinus uses the term 'phantasy' in the passage not concerned with a problem of art may indicate his conscious avoidance of the term in his theory of art, perhaps because of the unfavorable connotations given by Plato, and perhaps because here the mystic conquered over the psychologist.

More important, however, than these conjectures is the fact that Plotinus, with Apollonius, recognizes that phantasy is a power of conception, and thus superior to Nature's blind, unthinking imitation. Again, the term denotes a power of thought rather than a habit of reproduction, expression, and it thus ceases to be synonymous with 'imitation.' Obviously, it is not, for Plotinus, the creative capacity of the artist; that is *νοησις*, Reason, which brings man closest to *νοῦς*, and hence to the One. In a mystic's theory of vision *φαντασία* is no lofty power of conception; but, on the other hand, it is not primarily a capacity for expression, and hence merely synonymous with 'image-making' and 'imitation.'

CHAPTER VII

THE LESSER NEOPLATONISTS

We shall now consider the utterances of three men, who, after Plotinus, may be called the greatest Neoplatonists, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus, and, in addition, certain passages from Olympiodorus, a commentator upon the Dialogues, who, although not usually considered among the Neoplatonists, has interests and points of view in common with them. In a subsequent chapter we shall study the views of three great Christian thinkers, Augustine, Synesius, and Boethius, profoundly influenced by Neoplatonism, which will help us to understand the influence upon mediaeval conceptions of a kind of thought which sought to combine the metaphysics of Plato with the psychology of Aristotle and the Stoics. These utterances are important, not for their originality, but for their transmission of certain well defined traditions, and for new, and often interesting, combinations of already existing materials.

We have said that a common, consistent Neoplatonic theory of phantasy cannot be anticipated, since the philosophical movement which we are studying is essentially eclectic, and hence one thinker in his references to 'phantasy' may rely mainly upon the Dialogues, another upon Aristotle, and another upon Plotinus. One common point of view, however, may be taken for granted: in their belief in the reality of the supra-sensible world, they would tend to belittle any power, however minutely described by the psychologists, which was primarily concerned with the lower world of sensations. Although the *Timaeus*, the favorite dialogue of the Neoplatonists, contained an appreciation of phantasy as a power of vision, the mystical impulses of these thinkers would naturally lead away from such a view.

The materials for constructive theories of phantasy among the Neoplatonists were mainly furnished by Aristotelian psychology, with here and there real insight into the significance of the Dialogues. Neoplatonism had a place for phantasy because it was not uncompromising in its insistence that the one reality was immaterial

Being. If it had adopted that position, it would have been forced to deny the existence of phantasies. But, as we have seen in Plotinus, it is essentially dualistic, recognizing the existence, but not the ideality, of the world of experience; and this persistent dualism allowed the thinker to go frequently to Aristotle for the most complete account of the mental processes in this lower soul. In estimating the importance of this Aristotelian psychology we must keep in mind the fact that these great Neoplatonists are practically contemporary with the outstanding commentators upon Aristotle. Porphyry was born in 233, and Proclus, the last great Neoplatonist, died in 485. Of the great Aristotelian commentators, Alexander of Aphrodisias probably comes at the end of the second century, Themistius towards the end of the fourth, and Simplicius in the sixth.

The view of Porphyry (233-304) is a characteristic depreciation of phantasy growing out of Neoplatonic dualism. "The knowledge of incorporeal natures is attainable by us with great difficulty; because, through not being able to behold them intuitively, we are involved in doubt about their nature; and this takes place as long as we are under the dominion of phantasy."¹ Not-being, for Porphyry as for Plotinus, is the image and phantasm of bulk or size.² Phantasy gives to the external object, or semblance of reality, an appearance of size and shape. In true knowledge the mind and the object of its contemplation should become one; but in sensible experience under the influence of phantasy the mind gives sensible being to that which exists only spiritually. "When you have assumed an eternal essence, if you add a subsistence in place, or a relation to a certain thing, . . . you separate yourself from the perception of it by receiving as a veil the phantasy which [underlies] your conjectural apprehension of it."³ Porphyry shows the tendency of the consistent mystic in belittling the power which gives shape to ideas; phantasy, because it supplies concreteness in terms of time and space, because it gives to our ideas a local habitation and a name, becomes for him a powerful inimicable to intuitions of the Divine.⁴

¹ *Porphyrii Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*, ed. by B. Mommert, Lipsiae, 1907, p. 26; in *Select Works of Porphyry*, tr. by Thomas Taylor, London, 1823, p. 223.

² *Sent., op. cit.*, p. 8; in Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

³ *Sent., op. cit.*, p. 36; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 230. See also p. 207.

⁴ In a passage such as this we may estimate by contrast the significance of German critical philosophy for phantasy through its insistence upon the notions of space and time as essential constructions of the imagination.

His supposed criticism of Stoic views recorded in Stobaeus⁵ is in harmony with this. Here he objects to the notion that in the perceptive faculty there may be two functions, one dependent upon organs of sense, and involving phantasy, and the other independent of such organs. These cannot be subordinate to the same genus.

There are . . . two kinds of perception that are very different from each other; sense-perception receives an impression, and applies itself to an exterior object; on the contrary, intellectual perception does not receive any impression. . . . Sensibility differs entirely from intelligence, acting with or without the help of organs; in the former case it is called sensation; in the latter phantasy. Nevertheless, sensation and phantasy belong to the same genus. In understanding, intuitive intelligence is superior to intelligence, which applies to sensation or phantasy; this latter kind of thought, whether called discursive thought, or anything else (such as opinion), is superior to sensation and phantasy, but inferior to intuitive thought.⁶

We find in Porphyry a psychological trilogy, derived probably from Aristotle, which, thus baldly stated, was to become one of the commonplaces of the mediaeval theory of phantasy. There are three powers by which the soul comes to know: sense, phantasy, and intellect. The first knows by coming in contact with external objects; the second, not only by attending to the external, but by giving subsistence to this external reality; and the third by surveying itself.⁷ In this scheme there is no evolution, as in the Aristotelian psychology, from percept to concept. The effect is mainly to put phantasy in its proper place; it is close to sensation, connected with matter, and the unreal world. In Aristotle the middle term participated in both the material and the spiritual, and made the transition between them; but the old dualism inherent in Platonism causes Porphyry to classify his middle term as belonging to one world or the other, and he does not hesitate to condemn it.

So hostile is he to recognizing phantasy as essential in the higher realm that he insists upon the fundamental contrast of intellect and phantasy as no verbal quibble.⁸ He takes pains to

⁵ Stobaeus, *Ecl. Phys.*, 1. 52, tr. in Guthrie's *Plotinos*, *op. cit.*, 4. 1255.

⁶ I have substituted 'phantasy' for the translator's 'imagination.' It is significant that, of four references to *φαντασία* in Stobaeus, three are to Porphyry, and one to Aristotle. See *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologia libri duo priores*, ed. by Wachsmuth, 2 vols., Berlin, 1884, pp. 313, 314, 344.

⁷ *Sent.*, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42-43; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

explain away the Aristotelian view, popularized by the Stoics, that every intellectual perception as well as every sense perception has its attendant phantasy: 'as a phantasy in the organs of sense accompanies the sensation, so by *analogy* we speak of a phantasm of our intellection in the soul of man considered as a physical organism.'⁹ To such a degree did the term denote materiality that he objects to calling memory a preserver of phantasies, for memory, for one who believes in the doctrine of reminiscence, is a power of recollecting previous conceptions.¹⁰ Porphyry's attitude is typical of that species of Neoplatonism which, in emphasizing the old dualism, adds nothing of constructive value.

Iamblichus (died c. 330), pupil of Porphyry, can be best understood by considering a passage from a letter of the latter to the Egyptian Anebo. Porphyry lived at a time when the practice of theurgy was prevalent, and Greek thought was much interested in the religious beliefs and practices of the Egyptians. He naturally found it difficult to reconcile his psychology of mysticism with its contempt for the lower powers of the mind with a system of obtaining knowledge of future events making use of material means and symbols. He asks how one can distinguish between the token of a god, or of an archangel, or of a demon, or of some ruling power of the soul. He recognizes at the outset that the power of speaking about oneself and of making use of phantasies (*τὸ εἰδωλοποιὸν φάντασμα φαντάζειν*) is common to gods, demons, and all higher types.¹¹

I wish you to explain [he writes] what [takes place] . . . in divination. For we frequently obtain a knowledge of future events through dreams, . . . not being, at that time, in a tumultuous ecstasy. . . . But many through enthusiasm and divine inspiration predict future events, and are then in so wakeful a state as even to [function] according to sense, and yet they are not conscious of the state they are in. . . . Others who are conscious what they are doing in other respects, are divinely inspired according to the phantastic part [*κατὰ τὸ φανταστικόν*]. . . . Some see visions [*φαντάζονται*] in the waters, others on the walls, others in the air, and still others in the sun.¹²

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Porphyrii Epistola*, 10, in *Iamblichi de Mysteriis Liber*, ed. by G. Parthey, Berlin, 1857, Intro. p. xxxii.

¹² *Porphy. Epist.*, 14, in Parthey, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiii-iv; for translation see Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, tr. by Thomas Taylor, Chiswick, 1821, p. 5.

Porphyry is also puzzled whether divination, the knowledge of the future, is caused by God, angel, demon, or other power.¹⁴ 'Or does the soul speak and phantasy these, and is this then an affection of the soul set up by unimportant causes. Or is divination a combination of internal hypostases and divine ideas coming from outside of us?'¹⁴ 'Then does the soul beget through such movements a power of seeing the future in phantasy [δύναμιν φανταστικήν τοῦ μέλλοντος], or are demons to be held responsible?'¹⁵ '[It is also said] that ecstasy of the dianoetic part is a cause of divination, . . . and phantasies caused by disease . . . and phantasies stimulated by the art of enchantment.'¹⁶ Porphyry's perplexities seem to indicate frequent use of the term 'phantasy' in current discussions of ecstasy and prophecy. In lieu of these theories Porphyry seeks an account in keeping with the basic tenets of Platonism.

Iamblichus, his pupil, was ready with a more satisfactory explanation, based upon the dualism of Plotinus, and the recognition of two kinds of phantasy. The soul, he says, has a twofold life, one in conjunction with the body, the other separate from it. When we are awake the soul for the most part lives this physical life, save when it separates itself from it through intellect and reason; but when we are asleep, we are wholly freed from this physical life, and enjoy an existence devoid of change.¹⁷ Iamblichus describes this lower world, as Plotinus did, as standing in relation to the higher as images to their originals; and like Plotinus, he associates with these two worlds two kinds of phantasy. With the lower of these we are not concerned. Although they do not correspond to true Being, they may, nevertheless, be regarded as true; but, like images in mirrors, they may be mere perversions or imitations of Being and faint reflections.¹⁸

'But the Gods and those who follow the Gods [evidently demons] reveal true images of themselves; they by no means [produce] phantasms of themselves such as those made in water or in mirrors [i. e. images of the lower type just referred to]. These phantasms become the cause of deception to those that believe in them, and withdraw the spectators from the true knowledge of the Gods.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 15, in Parthey, *ibid.*

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 16, in Parthey, p. xxxv.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 19, in Parthey, *ibid.*

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 22, in Parthey, p. xxxvi.

¹⁷ *De Myst.*, 3. 3, in Parthey, *op. cit.*, p. 106; tr. in Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 2. 10, in Parthey, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[But] may it not be natural to divinity to extend a phantasm from itself?'¹⁹ This is obviously the theory of the *Timaeus*.²⁰ 'But how,' comes the answer, 'can that which is firmly established in itself, and which is the cause of essence and truth, produce in a foreign seat a certain deceitful imitation of itself? By no means, therefore, does divinity either transform itself into phantasms, [n]or extend these from himself to [others].' It is such an objection as one would have expected from Porphyry.

Again the objector replies that the relation of God to demon is not that of an original to a likeness. The relation between them cannot be expressed in terms of 'phantasy.'²¹ If, however, God or demon does not make of himself a phantasy, at least he is capable of conveying divine truth to human beings by means of phantasy. This Porphyry had felt, but had been at loss to explain. Iamblichus proceeds to his exposition of the view of the *Timaeus*:

All of this that you speak of as different forms of prophecy rests in a single power, and should be called a kind of illumination [*φωτὸς ἀγωγή*]. This illuminates with divine light the ethereal and shining support [*δχημα*] surrounding the soul. Issuing from this divine light, divine phantasies take possession of the phantastic faculty within us, these being stimulated by the will of the Gods. . .²² This takes place in two ways: either from the Gods being present in the soul, or from their giving to the soul a kind of prophetic light proceeding from them. According to either mode the divine presence is one thing and the illumination another. The attentive power and the reason [merely] attend to what is taking place, since the divine light does not come in contact with these; but the faculty of phantasy is divinely possessed, being excited to types of phantasies not by its own power but by the Gods. This kind of phantasy is wholly different from the human type.²³

Hence [he cautions Porphyry] when you speak of mania, do not have in mind mere insanity as resembling it. By no means compare diseases of the body like suffusion, and the phantasies resulting from them, with divine phantasies. For the former have neither the function nor the essence nor the truth of that which they see, but extend mere phantasms of that which seems.²⁴

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, in Parthey, p. 94, and Taylor, p. 107.

²⁰ *Vide supra*, pp. 50 ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, in Parthey, p. 95, and Taylor, p. 108.

²² ἐξ οὗ δὴ φαντασίαι θεαῖαι καταλαμβάνουσι τὴν ἐν ἡμῖν φανταστικὴν δύναμιν κινούμεναι ὑπὸ τῆς βουλῆσεως τῶν θεῶν.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3. 14, in Parthey, p. 132; the translation is an adaptation of Taylor, p. 151.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. 25, in Parthey, p. 160, and Taylor, p. 184.

These divine phantasies, moreover, enter the mind only when it is in the proper state.

If the soul connects its intellectual and divine part with more excellent nature, then its phantasms will be more pure, whether they relate to Gods or incorporeal beings or to anything else contributing to truth concerning Intelligence.²⁵

If Iamblichus is interested in keeping separate this faculty of vision from a lower capacity of phantasy connected with sensation, he is also anxious not to have these higher phantasies regarded as images of the Gods. Neither are the statues of the Gods able to induce this phantastic insight. The one divine and unmingled Form of prophecy is not to be characterized by the many phantasms which are generated from it.²⁶ For why should any one exchange truly existing realities for images, thus descending from the first to the last of things? Do we not know that all that springs from such an art of making shadows is indistinct, and there is consequently no true phantasm of Truth?²⁷ This attitude causes him to attack what was apparently a prevalent theory of religious art: the statue, Iamblichus says, cannot be called the image of incorporeal reality.

Iamblichus confirms the impression left by Apollonius and Plotinus that the contact of Greek thought, and especially mysticism, with Egyptian religious symbolism resulted in severe criticism of the theory of imitation as applied to religious art. Although there is no evidence that the Greeks developed sympathetic understanding of the theory of symbolism underlying Egyptian practice, they were led to question, in turn, the theory of imitation as a belittling of their gods. Of the three attacks upon imitation in religious art that of Iamblichus is closer to the view of Plotinus: for the Neoplatonists phantasy was not a capacity for expression—save as a power of God—; and hence the divine phantasy, in the thought of Iamblichus, communicated to the human mind is not an image of reality. This phantasy is God's art, not man's; and as springing from the mind of God it is a means of influencing human thought and conduct. It has, however, no real correspondence, as image to reality, to the Mind of God. When we refer it to an original, regarding it as the reflection of the Divine Mind, we must be

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3. 3, in Parthey, p. 107, and Taylor, p. 119.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3. 27, in Parthey, p. 164, and Taylor, p. 184.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. 28, in Parthey, p. 167, and Taylor, p. 191.

told that the phantasy is a mere image, idol, imitation. Here the characteristic Neoplatonism keeps Iamblichus both from the view of Aristotle that the phantasy has significance when regarded as an image, and from the view attributed to Apollonius that the human mind has a power of phantasy superior to any process of copying nature or trying to imitate that which is above her.²⁸

The study of the *Timaeus* resulted both for Plutarch and Iamblichus in a theory of vision in terms of phantasy; but it is to be observed that this had little to do with describing the process of receiving these divine phantasies. A mystic's theory of vision in which the mind is represented as passive does not ordinarily stimulate psychological analysis; and hence the tendency is to assume that there is a human power capable of receiving phantasies corresponding to a divine power of communicating them. Little attention is paid to the process, save to assume that the higher power is analogous to the lower. Thus it is not surprising that Iamblichus added little to a doctrine of inspiration in terms of 'phantasy.' The mystic, believing in intuitive vision, is seldom prone, and less often able, to describe the activity of the mind at the time of vision. To do that would be to drag the vision to earth by conceding the existence of body and of bodily organs. He might recognize a human phantasy capable of receiving visions from above; but to pay great attention to the process would be to debase the spiritual communion and unduly to elevate a power of the lower soul. For this reason, one seldom finds in Neoplatonism, despite the interest in the *Timaeus* and the acquaintance with Aristotelian psychology, a constructive theory of phantasy as a power of vision.

Proclus (412-485), although the author of a noteworthy commentary on the *Timaeus*, has the mystic's distrust of phantasy. 'Beyond all bodies,' he writes, 'is the essence of soul, and beyond all souls the intellectual nature, and beyond all intellectual existences the One.'²⁹ This is the familiar scheme in which 'intellect has itself for the object of its thought The thought, the knowledge of the thought, and the cognisance of itself as thinking, are simultaneous activities of one subject.'³⁰ Here in the proper functioning of the intellect, a turning back upon itself, a perfect

²⁸ *Vide supra*, p. 114.

²⁹ See Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 165, quoting Στοιχ. θεολ., 20.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 176, quoting Στοιχ. θεολ., 167.

identity of the thinking subject and the object of thought,³¹ there is obviously little place for phantasy. It is not surprising to read: 'Flee from phantasies as corporeal, divisible, diverse,'³² and again, 'But opinion and phantasy and sense prevent us indeed from partaking of the presence of the gods, and draw us down from Olympian gods to earth-born motions.'³³

Like other Neoplatonists, however, Proclus found it difficult to ignore phantasy. Perhaps he was influenced by the *Dialogues*, perhaps by the psychology of Aristotle and the Stoics, and perhaps by one of his teachers, Plutarch of Athens (d. 431), who defined the place of phantasy as between thought and perception.³⁴ Proclus, acquainted with the same Aristotelian tradition, describes it as a kind of intellectual power giving shape to ideas (*νόησις οὐσα μορφωτική νοητῶν*).³⁵ It is a kind of reason experiencing within, which, though it desires to rise, is weak because of its descent into the body (*καὶ γὰρ ἡ φαντασία νοῦς τίς ἐστιν παθητικὸς ἐνδον μὲν ἐνεργεῖν ἐθέλων, ἀσθενῶν δὲ διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ στερεὸν πτώσῃ*).³⁶ It is the last echo, as it were, of intellect, and is not improperly called passive intellect.³⁷

It would be strange if the student of the *Timaeus* were to make no reference to its theory of reminiscence, which dignifies the function of phantasy. Proclus recognizes that the images of a former ideal existence are in the phantasy and can be recalled; but this capacity for calling up the former life of the soul by means of mental pictures is not the highest power of the mind. The completely purified soul, he adds, at last puts aside all phantasies and passes on to the state of intellectual intuition.³⁸

³¹ Στοιχ. θεολ., 171.

³² *Initia Phil. ac Theol. sive Procli et Olympiodori Comm. in Plat. Alcibiadem*, 4 vols., ed. by F. Creuzer, Frankfurt, 1820-5, 1. 245: *φευκτέον τὰς φαντασίας ὡς μορφωτικὰς καὶ ὡς μεριστὰς καὶ ὡς ποικίλλαν ἀμήχανον ὁσπιν ἐπείσαγοῦσας*.

³³ *Six Books of Proclus*, tr. by Thomas Taylor, 2 vols., London, 1816, 2. 140. See also *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Rem. Pub. Comm.* ed. by G. Kroll, 2 vols., Lipsiae, 1899-1901, 2. 177: *οὐδέμῃ γὰρ ψυχῇ φαντασίᾳ τῶν ἐνβλῶν χρῆται καὶ τυπωτικοῦς ἔχει λόγους μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν κάθαρσιν*.

³⁴ See Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

³⁵ *Comm. Rem. Pub.*, *op. cit.*, 1. 235. In an interesting parenthesis at another point (2. 107) Proclus writes: 'Of the ancients some say that *φαντασία* and *νοῦς* are identical; while others, making a distinction, say that there is not a single notion without its phantasy (*ἀφάνταστον νόησιν μηδεμίαν*).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2. 52.

³⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, 2. 271 (*On the Theology of Plato*).

³⁸ Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

Far more original than these views is his exposition of Plato's theory of fine art as it involves *εἰκασία* and *φαντασία*. Here he does not seem to have taken into account the dramatic character of the Dialogues; but he did seek to interpret one in the light of another,—the *Republic* in the light of the *Sophist* and of the *Laws*. At the outset of his discussion of *μίμησις* in the *Republic* he quotes the characterization of music in the *Laws* as a lumping together of 'imitation' and 'imagination.' Music has as its aim, not pleasure, but the correctness of the imaginative copy (*ὁρθότητα τῶν εἰκασθέντων*).³⁹ Poetry as the expression of the imagination, imaginative imitation, is objective. Criticism involves, not a subjective appeal to pleasurable impressions, but direct reference to the object of imitation.⁴⁰ Such a view is inherent in Platonism; but only Aristotle and Proclus seem to have been alive to this vital contrast in the thought of Plato between the criterion of pleasure and that of the faithfulness of the image or representation. Proclus is important in the history of *εἰκασία* for his insistence upon the divorce.

It is not, however, that he does not recognize the motive of pleasure in the fine arts; that motive he associates with another faculty. "Through the use of the term *φανταστικόν* [in connection with *μίμησις*] Socrates sets forth very clearly the fact that in cutting off from fine art the phantastic element of imitation he means that phantasy aims at pleasure alone and the entertainment of the nearer. For the phantastic element of imitation falls short of the imaginative in this respect: that, whereas the imaginative looks to the correctness of the imitation, the other looks only to the pleasure which comes to the multitude from phantasies."⁴¹

This is one of the most important distinctions in the early history of fancy and imagination, since it definitely connects *εἰκασία* with one criterion and *φαντασία* with another; it helps to make significant connotations. Although Plato had implied that *μίμησις φανταστική* aimed merely to give pleasure through the expression of subjective states, not through the right imitation of right objects, he nowhere explicitly connected 'phantasy' with pleasure. We have already suggested that Aristotle was silent concerning 'phantasy' in the *Poetics* because he wished to break what to his mind was an un-

³⁹ *Comm. Rem. Pub.*, *op. cit.*, I. 190, interpreting *Laws*, 667 c, beginning, "Then shall we say that all music is *εἰκαστική* and *μιμητική*?"

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 191.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

fortunate association. Philostratus and Plotinus, in turn, although interested in imitation, in its implications for 'phantasy,' did not see that the criterion of pleasure was involved. Proclus seems to have been the first to make explicit this distinction between 'phantasy' and 'imagination,' and hence to involve the terms in the formulation of the aesthetic problem. 'Does poetry seek to please or to tell the truth?' The answer of Proclus is that it seeks to please when phantastic, to tell the truth when imaginative.

We cannot assume, however, that Proclus had any great influence in formulating in these terms one of the problems of fine art. His purpose as a commentator would tend to limit his influence as an original thinker, especially if his interpretations of various passages on fine art seemed to lack consistency, not to be parts of a theory. This failure to develop a consistent body of doctrine is apparent when one compares the passage just examined with his commentary on *Republic VI*.⁴² Here he is not primarily interested in an aesthetic theory, Socrates' analysis of creative art, but in the defense of Homer. He is anxious to demonstrate that Homer was not merely concerned with imitations of the world of sense-impressions, as Socrates averred, but with the highest concerns of the intellect. From this point of view he considers the fourfold classification by the use of which Plato had apparently degraded Homer. There were in this scheme four realms: of intelligence (*νόησις*), of thought (*διάνοια*), of belief (*πίστις*), and of imagination (*εἰκασία*).⁴³ The first Proclus calls 'above conceptual knowledge' (*ἐπιστήμη*); the second he terms 'conceptual knowledge'; the third is the object of right opinion; and the last is that which is below right opinion. He has seemingly reduced four terms to two, 'conceptual knowledge' and 'right opinion,' with *εἰκασία* concerned with that which is even below the latter.

He aims to show how Homer participates in all four realms or activities. Whenever, possessed by God and informed by the Muses, he utters mystical ideas about the gods, then he may be said to indulge in that which is above thought, *νόησις*. Whenever he discusses the life of the soul, differences in nature, and political affairs, then he is concerned with conceptual knowledge, or, in Plato's classification, *διάνοια*. When he renders appropriate copies, imitations, of things and human faces, then he gives us an imaginative

⁴² *Ibid.*, I. 192 ff.

⁴³ *Vide supra*, p. 25.

imitation [μίμησιν εικαστικήν]. This is evidently the product of right opinion in the realm called by Plato that of πίστις. It would seem at first glance that the adjective εικαστική should be used only in speaking of the fourth realm which Plato had called that of εικασία; but it is at once evident that Proclus identifies imaginative or right imitation with right opinion, and phantastic or wrong imitation with wrong opinion, his fourth realm corresponding to Plato's εικασία. The two kinds of imitation, imaginative and phantastic, for Plato, at least at one point, a comprehensive classification of fine art, are here identified with opinion, a common name, in the Neoplatonic dualism, for the lower soul. 'But when the copy is made,' he continues, 'for the sake of its impression upon the many, and not with an eye to its correspondence to an original, . . . then he is a poet of the phantastic type. For instance, when the sun is represented as rising from a lake, not as it is, but as it appears to us on account of its distance, we have the phantastic power of the poet. But when he imitates heroes waging war, deliberating and speaking according to life, some discreet, some courageous, some fond of honor, such creative activity is imaginative.'⁴⁴

Perhaps no Neoplatonist shows so clearly as Proclus the consequences for the theory of fine art of the vicious dualism from which none escaped. When all mental activities are divided into thought and opinion, then fine art in so far as it is imitative, 'imaginative,' or 'fanciful,' and capable of giving pleasure, is a matter of opinion and not thought. In other words, art judged by any aesthetic standards whatever is not an affair of the thinking soul. For the Neoplatonic mystic it is not lofty art because it is not the kind of thought which is philosophy or the kind of mental process which is above thought, intuition of the Divine. Proclus tells us that when Homer as a teacher represents the different hypostases of the parts of the soul or the arrangement of the elements, earth, air, and water, he is concerned with the next to the loftiest branch of poetry, that involving διάνοια; and when he teaches the demiurgic art, or the significance of the chains of Hephaestus, he proceeds mythologically, being filled with enthusiasm and possessed by the Muses. Here Homer has an inspiration directly from God, and this kind of poetry may be called above conceptual thought, or, ac-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 192.

cording to Plato, intelligence (*νοησις*).⁴⁵ This inspiration of the poet, it will be noticed, is at one extreme, and phantasy at the other; at this point Proclus is far from connecting the poet's mystical powers with the God-given phantasies of the *Timaeus*. He praises the poet for being a philosopher or a mystic, for writing about theology, or politics, or physics, not about the imitation of 'things and human faces' according to the life, or for the sake of the impression upon the many. It is significant for this study that the theories of fine art which banished aesthetic criteria banished also 'phantasy' and 'imagination' as critical terms to be commended. The battle for the recognition of the dignity of the imagination in works of art is in part the battle for the reestablishment in criticism of aesthetic rather than metaphysical and ethical standards. It is also the result of two philosophical principles, one essentially Platonic, that the lower is the image of the higher; and the other Aristotelian, that every thought must have its phantasy or concrete representation.

Proclus at another point indicates the way to this rehabilitation. He justifies myths as presenting supra-sensible truth in sensible form, i.e. in terms of phantasy.⁴⁶ The myth, although not itself truth, is a means of bringing the soul in contact with truth, and is for Proclus connected with dreams, and waking visions produced by demons. In these phantasy acts by giving emotional power to that which in itself is not calculated to affect the emotions, by giving form to what was originally formless. The myth becomes a kind of phantastic mind [*τὸν φανταστικὸν νοῦν*] and a means of instruction through images. It gives shape to the intellectual light of truth, concreteness to thought. But only when the inner form and the external form are in harmony, the one being the expression of the other, are the presentments of phantasy to be trusted. In a passage such as this we see exemplified the other tendency of Neoplatonism, to recognize, despite the mystic's contempt for a 'lower' power, the creative capacity of phantasy for giving concrete expression to the spiritual and to the immaterial. These two diverse tendencies mediaeval thought inherited.

Olympiodorus (late sixth century), an Alexandrian Platonist, not to be identified with the Aristotelian of that name, illustrates

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1. 193.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2. 107-8; see also Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

only the characteristic depreciation of phantasy. There are two forces, he writes, which stand in the way of the life intellectual, phantasy among the powers pertaining to knowledge, and ambition among the vital powers. It was because of phantasy that Odysseus had need of the moly of Hermes and of right reason in order to escape Calypso, herself a phantasy. For phantasy is a veil.⁴⁷ On this account one uses the expression, 'phantasy with the flowing robes' (*φαντασίη ταχύπεπλε*). On this account, also, Odysseus was first brought low by Circe's appearance as a daughter of the sun. Phantasy, he concludes, stands in the way of our intellectual processes. Therefore, if we have phantasies while in the state of ecstasy, the ecstatic state ceases, for phantasy and ecstasy are antithetic principles.⁴⁸ In the act of augury we function without phantasy (*ἀφαντασιόστως*). If we have a phantasy during the act, the sneeze escapes.⁴⁹ Reiterating at another point his charges against phantasy and ambition, he includes 'images and deceptions of the perceptive and phantastic kinds of knowledge' among the fourth species of hindrances to right thinking. Ambition and phantasy constitute a kind of last garment of the desires, with which we are loath to part. Many philosophers, he adds, are involved by these, and especially by phantasy.⁵⁰

He is also acquainted with Stoic views, especially those of Epictetus. On account of the unideal character of phantasies, he writes, Epictetus calls upon us to call them by name: 'Phantasy, you are a phantasy, and not at all what you appear to be.'⁵¹ The passage which follows indicates the existence of another question of dispute between Platonist and Stoic involving 'phantasy.' 'Therefore the philosophical company of the Stoics through the functioning of phantasy assumes God to be a body (*διὰ τὸ κατὰ φαντασίαν ἐνεργεῖν σῶμα τὸν θεὸν ὑπέλαβον*), for phantasy bestows bodies upon the bodiless. What, then, do they say—that there is no thought without a phantasy (*ἀφαντασιόστος*)? The soul, he says, in opposition to this, which thinks in terms of the universal, functions without

⁴⁷ *Vide supra*, p. 132.

⁴⁸ Olympiodorus, *In Plat. Phaed. Comm.*, ed. W. Norvin, Leipzig, 1913, pp. 34, 35; and p. 38.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38; sneezing, like the twitching of the eyelids, was a recognized sign in divination.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35. For Epictetus, *vide supra*, pp. 92 ff.

phantasy. In a later passage he is even more vigorous in his reply to the question, 'How do we think without phantasy?' Phantasy sails along with reason, not helping to fill its sails, but making the water turbid, as does a mighty storm.¹² This nautical language, we shall see, was not uncommon in Neoplatonic theory.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

CHAPTER VIII

NEOPLATONIC VIEWS OF THREE EARLY CHRISTIANS

The last two chapters have traced the fortunes of 'fancy' and 'imagination' in the main stream of Neoplatonism represented by Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus. The initial point of view of that eclectic system of philosophy, we have seen, was, in general, inimicable to a constructive theory of phantasy, although acquaintance with Aristotelian psychology led to a recognition of its necessary functions, and the Plotinian view of two kinds of phantasy was capable of important consequences in a dualistic philosophy. A notable interpretation of the *Timaeus* also makes one aware that Neoplatonism is capable at any time of taking a course which leads to the ennoblement of a mental capacity which its basic philosophy affected to despise. This paradoxical nature of Neoplatonic thought concerning *φαντασία* and related powers can hardly be overemphasized: its idealism taught it to despise phantasies, its dualism found a place for them, its psychology, largely Aristotelian, taught it to study them, and its passion for the *Timaeus* led it to recognize them as God-given.

These passages from the leading Neoplatonists are the more important because of the historical relations of this philosophy and early Christian thought. A philosophy which profoundly influenced Christian mysticism was destined also, despite mutual hostility of Christian and Neoplatonist, to determine the shape of many dogmas, especially as they related to the opposition of mind to matter, and a higher to a lower soul. When Christian thinkers had need of psychology, they were quite as likely to employ the Aristotelian tradition of the Neoplatonists as to return to more trustworthy Peripatetic accounts. This tendency of early Christian theology to inherit the forms of thought of its bitter pagan enemy will be our excuse for studying at length the theories of fancy and imagination of three early Christians, who, although not offering professedly Neoplatonic views, show the effect of contact with the pagan views which we have described. Although the utterances of only one of these thinkers, Augustine, may be called definitely a

Christian's attitude towards imagination, the views of all three—Synesius in his book on dreams, Augustine in his commentary on Genesis, and Boethius in his *Consolation*—help one to study at first hand what the Middle Ages were to inherit from pagan philosophy, and especially from Neoplatonism. Sometimes, of course, the thinker goes directly to Plato or Aristotle, and sometimes it may be a Stoic view which is reproduced; but more often, we shall see, it is the great Neoplatonic synthesis, or attempted synthesis, of Platonism and Aristotelianism which determines the views of early Christian thinkers.

Although Synesius (378–c. 430) was born twenty-four years after Augustine, the views of the former, as more purely Neoplatonic and quite unaffected by Christianity, may well be considered first. The treatise *De Insomniis* shows plainly the influence of Aristotle and Plotinus rather than that of Paul and the early fathers. One must constantly keep in mind that it is in an essay on dreams that Synesius proposes to talk about 'a certain kind of life according to phantasy, which is sometimes better, sometimes worse, than the usual life of men, according as our spirit is healthy or diseased.'¹

The reader is at once involved in the familiar Neoplatonic trilogy. The mind (*νοῦς*) possesses the form of that which is; and, in like manner, the soul possesses the form of that which is in the process of becoming, of coming into being. Mind stands in relation to Being as Soul to Becoming; and it would then follow that Mind stands in the same relation to Soul as the world of Reality does to the world of phenomena or appearances. One recognizes the familiar dualism in its most vicious form. At this point, however, Synesius has recourse to the doctrine of emanation which asserts that Mind is responsible for Soul, and Soul for this world of phenomena, which is Nature. If the theory of emanation will explain the relation between Mind and Soul, it ought also to explain the relation of the world of being and the world of phenomena as an emanation of a lower from a higher. If this is true, it then becomes the business of the Soul to see this relation, to recognize in this world of appearances and half-truths the revelation of eternal truth. The Soul, with functions which make it acquainted with this lower world, can explain it as an emanation of a higher, and hence as a means of

¹ *De Insom.*, in *Synesii Episcopi Cyrenes Opera Omnia*, in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, 66. 1316.

knowing the higher.² But the Soul, unlike the Mind which comprehends Being by means of immediate intuitions, comes to know the world of phenomena through impressions, these becoming the bases for concepts. In the operations of Mind there is no place for phantasy; but in the operations of the Soul it is employed constantly.³

In this contrast between the functions of Mind and Soul in comprehending the spiritual and material respectively phantasy is seemingly doomed. Again the doctrine of emanation saves the situation by enabling Synesius to assert that the Soul, far from being bound down to Nature, with which at one extreme it is in contact, is, at the other, firmly connected with the primary world-soul from which it is derived, and hence with Mind. This leads to the assertion that we are unable to perceive the workings of Mind save as the power concerned with general concepts gives us knowledge; and this power (ἐπιστατική δύναμις) involves phantasy. We thus arrive at the significant deduction that we get no knowledge of that which is in the primary world-soul unless an impression has come to the phantasy.⁴ The function of phantasy is thus to help one to know the realm of supra-sensible reality in terms of the lower world of sensible experience. It is a view which probably derives from the Plotinian notion that phantasy enables man by having a grasp of the significance of things to lift himself above unideal Nature and to come closer to the world of the Intelligible.⁵ Phantasy is able to comprehend what is in the Divine Mind, in the realm of immutable Being, since Truth sometimes manifests itself in lower terms,—in terms of a universe apprehended by the senses.

In his description of *φαντασία* Synesius constantly keeps in mind this contrast of spirit and matter, reality and appearance, Being and Becoming:

For if each object of sense is a form joined with matter, we discover the flux of matter in its composition. Reason understands that it is the nature of images to be emanations, so that those things which are coming into being have not the high worth of the things which really exist. Of all of these changing images the phantastic spirit [τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα] is a

² *Ibid.*, p. 1288.

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1288 C: οὕτως οὐδὲ τῶν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ψυχῇ τὴν ἀντὶληψὶν ἔσχομεν, πρὶν εἰς φαντασίαν ἔκειν αὐτῶν ἐκμαγεῖα.

⁵ *Vide supra*, p. 129.

mirror which envisages them. These wander hither and thither, detached from any abode because of their changeableness and their lack of recognition by any one as participating in Being; and when they fall in with the animal spirits, which, being images, also have an abode in Nature, they adhere to them and rest in them as in a home. Of things in the process of becoming they despatch real images, which in the passage of time become weak and fading. Of things which have real being, since these are in a permanent state, they are images of a more lively and manifest variety, while of the future they are images more indefinite and undetermined. For the future is that which has not yet come to pass, the flourishing of uncompleted nature, like the fruit not yet disclosed, the produce of seed not yet planted. Hence there is need of art to understand the future, since from the future one gets merely suggestive images, not imprinted likenesses as from that which now exists.⁶

In this somewhat obscure passage it is apparent that Synesius uses the term 'images' to indicate the relation of the emanation to its original: there are images of the world of Becoming, and of the world of Being, and of the future; and in the formation of these images the 'phantastic spirit' is the creator, the power which gives shapes in virtue of its contact with matter. To phenomena it gives one kind of shape, to supra-sensible reality another, to the future only suggestive outlines in comparison with the faithful reproductions of the present. What the writer has in mind in this work on dreams will presently become apparent.

He had already said that a noteworthy fact about the phantasy as ordinarily conceived is that it is comparatively immaterial,⁷ demanding for its functioning no separate organ of the senses. It is, as it were, a kind of sense of the senses, a collective or common sense, less material than the particular senses because it is not dependent upon physical organs.⁸ Since it is less material, it is nearer to the soul, a more suitable means of receiving impressions from above, a means whereby the Divine Mind may come into contact with the mind which dwells in the human frame. It is a kind of primary body of the soul, capable of being informed by God. 'The primary [world] soul, descending from the spheres, borrowing and making use of the phantasy as of a boat, has inter-

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1309 C.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1288 C.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1289 C: *Αισθησις γὰρ αἰσθήσεων αὐτῇ, ὅτι τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα, κοινωτάτον ἐστὶν αἰσθητήριον, καὶ σῶμα πρῶτον ψυχῆς.*

course with corporeal body.⁹ For Synesius the phantasy is the great principle of mediation between matter and spirit, reason, the effluence of Mind, and the irrational elements in life;¹⁰ it mediates between and participates in two worlds and two realms of the soul. For Synesius the phantasy, or, as he often calls it, τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα, is explicitly what it was for Neoplatonists generally as they endeavored to combine Aristotelian psychology with a Platonic dualistic metaphysic: the paradox of the human mind. The power which was capable of making one aware of the basest facts of physical existence¹¹ was also, when raised by the Divine Mind, capable of becoming a means of communication with God, of mounting in its purified state with the mind into luminous spaces. "Through it we have union many times with the gods, who warn us, respond to us, and counsel us."¹² It is not surprising, he thinks, that after a dream one should speak of having mingled and conversed with gods. Phantasy is also responsible for the detection of threatening plots and the discovery of efficacious remedies for diseases.¹³

Synesius writes with the enthusiasm of one who has made a discovery,—of one who, studying the power which many of his fellow-thinkers had despised, had found it a means to vision. 'Since, then, there is disclosed to the soul, making no effort on its own part, a way to the most complete view of reality, concerning which it had never before conceived even the desire, or to which it had never meditated ascent, is it not a more marvellous thing to lift oneself above nature, bringing oneself nearer to the Intelligible, after having wandered so far that one does not know whence one came?'¹⁴ The right exercise of the phantasy, in turn, is for the good of the soul. It is true that 'once the communion is over, the union must be broken: the Soul must return to its proper sphere, while phantasy must lapse again into its usual lower activities.'¹⁵ But Synesius finds consolation: 'That man whose phantastic spirit, pure and well restrained, receives a true impression, either in waking or dreaming, has the promise of the better end in the form

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1293 B.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1292 B.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1293 D.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 1288 C.

¹³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 1288 D.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1293 B.

of the soul.'¹⁶ Like other Neoplatonists, however, he is ready to confess that to see God directly in terms of reason is the highest state. 'We cannot form conceptions save through phantasy, unless in a moment, perchance, one has immediate contact with immaterial form. To surmount phantasy is a thing as difficult as it is desirable. Blessed is he whom Reason and Prudence bring to old age, says [Plato], speaking of a state devoid of phantasy. But the usual life is one of phantasy, or of phantasy in the service of reason.'¹⁷

In this view we have the outcome of a tradition which had its source in the *Timaeus* and hitherto its most interesting embodiment in Iamblichus. It is an attitude towards phantasy in the process of visions which only a few of the Neoplatonists could have accepted. Plotinus, although he failed to enunciate such a theory, might have accepted it; and Synesius is indebted to him. Porphyry and Olympiodorus, however, would have rejected it, since they were not sufficiently eclectic to acknowledge a rôle of phantasy in the human mind complementary to the divine phantasies described in the *Timaeus*. It is, perhaps, because of this distrust by fellow Neoplatonists of phantasy that Synesius seems eager to anticipate objections by carefully describing functions usually attributed to it, by showing its capacity for conveying truth, and by frankly recognizing certain tendencies to error.

He has in mind also the objector who would deny to phantasy the functions ascribed to it because it is equally within the reach of the wise and the foolish.¹⁸ He refers to the testimony of the oracles that God often works through the foolishness of man, and then asserts, in a passage already glanced at, that phantasy, as a kind of mental center, a meeting point of sensations with no physical organs of its own, is less material than the senses, more spiritual, more divine, nearer to the Primary Soul and to Mind.¹⁹ To Neoplatonists who distrusted the power because it dealt with the subjective and the illusory Synesius also pointed out, with no little skill, that we inconsistently tend to trust our sensations but not our phantasy. For instance, the eye often deceives, both on account of its own nature and on account of the nature of the object; thus objects at a distance appear larger or smaller than they usually are,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1300 A.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1292 D-1293 A.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1289 A, B.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1289 C-1292 A.

an oar under water appears large, while its handle seems broken, and sometimes the eye itself is responsible for the deception because of humors. In the same way 'when the phantastic spirit is diseased, we do not demand clear or distinct spectacles.'²⁰ Synesius wishes the objector to take into account a diseased condition of the organ of phantasy just as he allows for a diseased condition of the organ of vision. Proneness to disease should not invalidate its capacity for receiving God-given visions. If there is disease, the malady must be diagnosed, the particular humor ascertained, and a cure effected so that the phantasy may return to its true nature. Only after the normal condition has been resumed, foreign elements having been expelled, is it ready for God to enter in.²¹ Hence one function of philosophy is to bring about a proper state for this communion. The best means is to cultivate the speculative life, making life a constant activity of the intellect, and thus preventing the movements of disordered phantasy. The soul will no longer be under the influence of external objects, and this intermediary essence, phantasy, is then able to abandon itself to the direction of the Primary Soul, and, purifying itself, it mounts to the heavens.²²

These phantasies, says Synesius, throw light upon the existence of the soul after death. Oracles agree in saying that the mind will have an existence comparable to the phantasies it has had in dreams.²³ So far as our capacity for vision has been vitiated by a diseased phantasy and by debasing physical conditions attendant upon it, so far has our life been an inadequate preparation for a happy future. The soul must always choose between a higher and a lower, a life of the spiritual man, and a life of the physical man; and there is an activity of phantasy corresponding to and reflecting each of these two kinds of life. The phantasy reveals the condition of the soul: 'when light and dry, it mounts with the soul to heaven; when heavy, dense, and moist, it descends into the clefts of the earth; and when loaded down with evil, it causes the soul to fall also.'²⁴ No one serves better than Synesius to emphasize this paradoxical view of the function of phantasy as at once the source of error and a means of spiritual vision.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1292 A.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1292 B.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1293 A.

²³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1293 B, C.

It is to be expected that in a theory of phantasy so obviously eclectic many of the commonplaces should be repeated. Thus Synesius repeats the Aristotelian notion that phantasy takes the place of reason in animals. It is also the very life and being of demons, a notion derived from Platonism: 'for they are wholly imaginary of being, being images, and are imprinted phantasies of that which is in process of becoming.'²⁵ He echoes a familiar idea from *De Anima* seemingly known to all Neoplatonists when he asserts that there can be no conception without a phantasy, adding, as any mystic would, 'except in that high state of immediate intuition of Divine Form.'²⁶ He probably shows acquaintance with the most persistent Stoic tradition, derived also from Aristotle, when he says that in the moral life the phantasy places before one pictures of states regarded as desirable, making the prisoner, as it were, free, and the private a general.²⁷ He shows, perhaps more clearly than any of the other Neoplatonists, the eclectic nature of their theories of phantasy: the *Timaeus*, the psychology of Aristotle, the ethics of the Stoics, and the dualism of Plotinus,—are involved in a single essay on the function of phantasy in dreams.

This is one of the most significant documents in studying the sources of early mediaeval tradition; but it is not equally important in its influence upon subsequent theory. At least, the work does not seem to have been widely read. The treatise was written before Synesius became a Christian and probably for that reason does not seem to have had the vogue of a comparable treatise on vision of a contemporary Christian, Augustine, a work similarly influenced by Neoplatonism, but fundamentally devoted to Christian theology. In so far as the two views were different, it was the view of the theologian which was to prevail,—with what consequences for mediaeval theory we shall soon discover.

The views of Augustine (354-430) also derive from the Neoplatonic tradition. This is evident from his attempts to settle the difficulties of his friend, Nebridius (fl. 390 A.D.) who had been instrumental in his conversion. Nebridius seemingly adhered to a theory of phantasy akin to that of Synesius, and was evidently attempting to reconcile this pagan view with Christian theology as formulated by his illustrious friend. He puts forward these

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1292 D.

²⁶ *Loc. cit.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1305

opinions rather timidly, partly in the form of questions, anticipating that the replies will bring to his ear 'the voice of Christ and the teaching of Plato and of Plotinus.'²⁸ 'As to this letter in particular,' he writes, 'answer it when you are ready to discuss a subtle problem in regard to phantasy and memory. My opinion is, that although not every phantasy is accompanied by memory, there is no exercise of memory without a phantasy.'²⁹ In reply to the objection that we can remember our acts of reasoning, he replies that reasoning implies the aid of phantasy to give shape to thought; it is this concrete embodiment of thought which we remember. In using this argument to prove that an act of phantasy must precede an act of memory, he shows familiarity with the Aristotelian psychology which Neoplatonism inherited. About this he seems comparatively certain; but about its corollary he is not so sure. 'Why, I should like to know, do we not affirm that the phantasy derives all its images from itself, rather than say that it receives these from the senses?' Here his argument is that just as the senses do not, in reality, give to the intellect its materials for knowledge, but only direct intellect to its proper objects, 'in the same manner the power of phantasy [*phantasticus animus*] may be indebted to the senses, not for the images which are the objects upon which it is exercised, but rather for the admonition arousing it to contemplate these images. And perhaps it is in this way that we are to explain the fact that the phantasy perceives some objects which the senses never perceived, whereby it is shown that it has all its images within itself, and from itself.'³⁰ Nebridius seems anxious to prove that the images of phantasy are not necessarily dependent upon sensation.

Although these views were sufficient to bring immediate objection from Augustine, they were comparatively innocent in comparison with those of a subsequent letter, in which Nebridius shows the influence of views similar to those of Synesius. The opinions of the first letter (that memories always depend upon phantasies, but that phantasies in turn do not always depend upon sensations) were evidently but an introduction to the more radical doctrine to be espoused in the second. He takes for granted that

²⁸ Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 33. 67. (*Epistola* vi), translated in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Philip Schaff, 14 vols., New York, 1886-1890, I. 223.

²⁹ *Loc. cit.* I have altered the translation at times for significant phrasing.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

dreams are divinely inspired, and he wishes to know by what art or magic the heavenly powers cause them.³¹ He is acquainted with at least two current explanations: 'Do they by their thoughts influence our minds, so that we also have the same images presented in our thoughts?' or 'Do they bring before us, and exhibit as actually done in their own body or in their own phantasy, the things which we dream?' To the latter explanation he sees the immediate objection that it would imply a second set of organs of sensation. The former, however, involves a perplexing question: If they frame such ideas in their phantasies, and thus impress our phantasies, giving visible form to what we dream, 'why is it . . . that I cannot compel your phantasy to reproduce those dreams which I have myself first formed by my phantasy? I have undoubtedly phantasy, and it is capable of presenting to my own mind the picture of whatever I please; and yet I do not thereby cause any dream in you, although I see that even our bodies have the power of originating dreams in us.' If our bodies have this power of causing phantasies in sleep to reproduce former experiences, why, asks Nebridius, has not one person's phantasy an even greater power over that of another?

As we again consider the familiar tradition which has its source in the *Timaeus*, and unites Nebridius with Plutarch, Iamblichus, and Synesius, it is important to notice that Nebridius sees nothing incongruous in the holding by a Christian of such views. Neither, perhaps, will the modern reader, who naturally thinks of Christianity as in sympathy with a theory of vision which derives from Plato. When one reflects further that early theology found little difficulty in assuming that truth existed in the mind of God, and that the importance of dreams and visions in Hebrew literature makes it no far step to the notion that God communicates truth to man in terms of imagination, it is at first surprising that this theory of phantasy, which would satisfactorily explain the experiences of the mystic, was not universally accepted. It is curious that a theory of dream-phantasies which Hypatia might have taught to both Synesius and Nebridius did not find ready acceptance within a church interested in divine revelation.

But we must also take into account the other attitude of idealism to phantasies, the attitude of Platonist and Neoplatonist alike, probably shared in by the early fathers, which would always connect this faculty with the lower world. And when, indeed, the early

³¹ *Patrol. Lat.*, 33. 71 (*Epist. viii*); in Schaff, *op. cit.*, I. 226.

Christian recognized sensations and emotions and phantasies as real, he seems, almost from the first, to have preferred the orderly description of the Aristotelian psychology. Here, in an account which definitely combatted the Platonic view of prophecy, the early Middle Ages would find no support for a theory of imaginative vision. Finally, we must reckon with the hostility of the Church to that very pagan philosophy which it was partially to absorb. There is much, for instance, in Augustine's account of the imagination which is Neoplatonic; but it is probably true that he thought of many of his opinions as directly at variance with those which he had formerly held. This may account, in part, for his attack upon the opinions of his friend: 'I was not a little stunned by the [letter] in which you ask me by what means certain thoughts and dreams are put into our minds by higher powers or by [demons].'³² The opposition is as pronounced as that between Porphyry and Iamblichus; but here it is the more noteworthy because it is the opposition of a Christian to what he considers a thoroughly pagan conception. Augustine's feeling had important consequences for the theory of imagination.

His first objection strikes at the roots of the Plotinian view that every memory implies a previous image in phantasy. Memories, he asserts, are not necessarily of previous physical states. 'If, therefore, . . . we fix our thoughts upon eternity itself as something which is for ever permanent, and consider, on the one hand, that it does not require any image fashioned by the imagination [*imaginaria figmenta*] as the vehicle by which it may be introduced into the mind; and, on the other hand, that it could never enter the mind otherwise than by our remembering it,—we shall see that, in regard to some things at least, there can be an exercise of memory without any image of the thing remembered being presented by the imagination [*sine ulla imaginatione*]'³³ In denying that all memories have their sources in imagination, he denies that the recollection of the most ideal objects is an imaginative experience at all, because they do not have their sources in sense-experience. This is a significant contradiction of the commonplace that every thought has its appropriate phantasy.

The second opinion of his friend he also vigorously contradicts: the mind is destitute of imagination, or of phantasy, (using under

³² *Epist.* ix, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 1. 227.

³³ *Patrol.*, 33. 68 (*Epist.* vii) in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 1. 224.

protest the term employed by Nebridius)³⁴ except as it is informed by the external senses. Since this involves the relation of sensation to imagination, memory, and conception, we shall consider the more formal psychology of *De Trinitate*.³⁵ In the analysis of this it is important to understand the aim which determines his grouping of mental functions: Augustine is endeavoring to show that just as God expresses Himself in the three substances of the Trinity, so there is in Man, made in His image, a similar three-fold division, extending even to the lowest mental powers. With this controlling principle of trinities, which at least suggests a Neoplatonic habit of thought, he combines elements from Aristotelian and Stoic psychology. He begins with the trinity of the outward man, composed of the thing visible, the act of vision (*visio*), and a desire for vision, an impulse which brings object and thinking subject together and results in an impression (*imago impressa sensui*) or bodily form (*speciem corporis*). 'These three, then, the body that is seen, and vision itself, and the will which joins both together, are manifestly distinguishable.³⁶ This distinction between the external object and its internal form, probably derived from the Stoics, was for Augustine most essential; it is only by an act of attention or of will that the two become one, that what the eye sees becomes the internal impression. 'And the will so powerfully combines these two, as both to apply the sense, in order to be informed, to that thing which is perceived, and to retain it when informed in that thing.' In other words, the will may result in a confusion of the external object and the mental impression. 'And if it is so vehement that it can be called love, or desire, or lust, it vehemently affects also the rest of the body of the human being; and where a duller and harder matter does not resist, changes it into like shape and color.'³⁷ Hence offspring often betray the particular phantasies of the mother; the embryo 'follows the bent of the soul of the mother, and the phantasy that is wrought in it through that body, which it has greedily beheld.'³⁸

³⁴ *Patrol.*, 33. 69, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, I. 225: 'Omnes has imagines, quas phantasias cum multis vocas,'

³⁵ *Patrol.*, 42. 983 ff. in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 144 ff. (*De Trin.* xi). For Augustine's psychology see M. Ferraz, *La Psychologie de St. Augustin*, Paris, 1862.

³⁶ Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 145. For this view among the Greek fathers see Procopius of Gaza (c. 465-528) *Comm. in Gen.* in *Patrol. Graeca*, 87. 225.

³⁷ Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 147.

³⁸ *Ibid.* This notion soon became a commonplace in discussions of imagination. See, e.g., *S. Theodori Studitae Epistolae*, Lib. I, in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, 99.

Only in the last passage does Augustine use the term *phantasia* to describe the product of this trinity of the outward man. Otherwise it is a *visio*, or *impressio*, or sometimes merely *sensus*.³⁹ The reference to the phantasy of the mother probably goes back to an early association of *φαντασία* with the concrete image resulting from sensation. He must have been aware that Aristotelians, Neoplatonists, and Stoics alike had called this impression a 'phantasy'; but he seems anxious to combat usage. More than once he objects to the use by Nebridius and others of *phantasia*, and hence in his avoidance of the term he had a profound influence upon the terminology of the Middle Ages, especially in the vogue of *imaginatio*. This term was not current, at least as the Latin translation of *φαντασία*, before the time of Cicero and Quintilian.⁴⁰ Its formation from *imago*, following recognized linguistic laws, and affording greater possibilities in the way of philosophical terminology than *visio* or *sensus*, may have been the work of Roman Stoics anxious to perpetuate the distinctions between *φαντασία*, *φάντασμα*, and *φανταστικός*, but unwilling merely to transliterate Greek terms. The two stems, the one Greek, the other Latin, afford opportunity for nice differentiation. We have no conclusive evidence, however, that *imaginatio* was employed before the time of Augustine.

Why he was so particular to avoid *phantasia* in his first psychological trinity will become apparent. In his second trinity, that of the inner man, the mind has the power of retaining this simple impression after the external object is no longer present. The *visio* of the first trinity becomes, as the simple memory-image, the material for the powers of the second, or internal trinity, where the will again effects a union of the object (the memory-image) and the thinking subject: 'the eye of the mind [*acies animi*] is informed from that which memory retains.' The result is internal vision, phantasy, or imagination. Augustine thus makes an important contribution to the theory of imagination by insisting upon the distinction between the simple sensory image (*visio*) and the re-

1220: *φασὶ γὰρ τινες γυναῖκα κατὰ τὸν συλλήψεως καιρὸν Αἰθιοπα φαντασθεῖσαν, Αἰθιοπα ἀποτεκεῖν*. This is the stock illustration; see also *Nicephori Blemmidæ Epitome Logica*, (c. 1255) in *Patrol Lat.*, 142, 849. In Theodore the story of Jacob and the ring-straked heifers is also cited as an example of the power of phantasy in conception.

³⁹ Augustine is obviously influenced by a Latin tradition. Cf. the usage of Lucretius and others; *vide supra*, pp. 87, 106, 107.

⁴⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 106, and 107, note 4.

productive imagination. The use of the term *φαντασία* for both had hindered the progress of the theory of imagination. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics had clearly recognized the two kinds of images; but Aristotle, however, used *φαντασία* as a synonym for 'common sense.'⁴¹ The term *φάντασμα*, again, might have been arbitrarily used for the simple image, but here the Stoic distinction would have operated against acceptance of this usage. With Augustine 'phantasy' may more readily denote high functions because it is not also identified with lower.

In his letter to Nebridius these are divided into three classes according as they originate in sensation, phantasy, or reason. The first is the simple perceptual image.

Under the second class come [he writes] all things which we imagine to have been, or to be so and so . . . or when we call up to our own minds a lively conception of the things described while we read history, or hear, or compose, or refuse to believe fabulous narrations. Thus, according to my own phantasy, and as it may occur to my own mind, I picture to myself the appearance of Aeneas, or of Medea with her team of winged dragons, or of Chremes, or Parmeno. To this class belong also those things which have been brought forward as true, either by wise men wrapping up some truth in the folds of such inventions, or by foolish men building up various kinds of superstition; e. g. the Phlegethon of Tartarus, and the five caves of the nation of darkness, and the North Pole supporting the heavens, and a thousand other prodigies of poets and of heretics. Moreover, we often say, when carrying on a discussion, 'Suppose that three worlds, such as the one which we inhabit, were placed one above another'; or, 'Suppose the earth to be enclosed within a four-sided figure,' and so on: for all such things we picture to ourselves, and imagine according to the mood and direction of our thoughts. As for the third class of images, it has to do chiefly with numbers and measure; which are found partly in the nature of things, as when the figure of the entire world is discovered, and an image consequent upon this discovery is formed in the mind of one thinking upon it; and partly in sciences, as in geometrical figures and musical harmonies, and in the infinite variety of numerals: which, although they are, as I think, true in themselves as objects of the understanding, are nevertheless the causes of illusive exercises of the imagination, the misleading tendency of which reason itself can only with difficulty withstand; although it is not easy to preserve even the science of reasoning free from this evil, since in our logical divisions and conclusions we form to ourselves, so to speak, calculi or counters to facilitate the process of reasoning.⁴²

⁴¹ *Vide supra*, p. 69, note 33.

⁴² *Epistola* vii, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, I. 225.

Here Augustine cogently summarizes the traditions concerning *phantasia* deriving from the outstanding classical psychologies, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Neoplatonic. Nowhere, save perhaps in Synesius, can one find so good a summary of the views which the Middle Ages inherited. Augustine recognizes the simple sensory-image, which he refuses to call a *phantasia*; the phantasy proper, exemplified by the pictorial representations accompanying the reading of history, the composition, reading, and criticism of fiction, myth, and allegory, and what we may call the hypothetical image, e. g. of the earth enclosed within a four-sided figure; and finally the phantasy in the service of reason, supplying the schemata of thought, such as a concrete representation of the universe, the figures of the geometrician, musical harmonies, and 'the infinite variety of numerals,' which he aptly calls 'calculi or counters to facilitate the process of reasoning.' With an acuteness, however, which the history of the thought of the Middle Ages was to demonstrate as prophetic, he observes that this play of phantasy becomes dangerous; our delight in conjuring with numerals, the work of imagination, can only with difficulty be restrained by reason. One wishes that Augustine had also explained his inclusion of musical harmonies under phantasies of the third type; his *De Musica* adds nothing. There is also no elaboration of the rôle of phantasy in myth, poetry, and allegory. The materials are here for a theory of imagination in fine art more subtle than those of Longinus and Quintilian, and probably more keenly analytical than any Neoplatonic view; but the student of the *Confessions* knows that any brilliant essay which the professor of rhetoric might have written the Bishop of Hippo, with a feeling akin to that of Plato toward his tragedy, would have destroyed. Indeed, the casual allusions to phantasy in poetry and myth, allegory and history, music and mathematics, suggest more than a passing interest in this aspect of imagination,—the interest of a rhetorician in a question important in the days of Quintilian, and probably more important in the next two centuries. But this is only conjecture; there is no theory of phantasy extant in the literature of the second sophistic, and Augustine, turning from a pagan's interest in the fine arts to a Christian's preoccupation with the soul, tells us little about the aesthetic imagination, but only about the power as it is concerned with conduct and with the mystic's capacity for vision.

In the passages which we have quoted there is nothing original in the sense of a recognition of attributes and functions of imagination hitherto unrecognized. There is, however, originality in the same sense in which there is originality in the utterances of Aristotle: his powerful thought about *phantasia* results in new syntheses of existing materials, new points of view, and, in consequence, a new direction to subsequent theory. First in importance is his habit of analysis and classification, which makes him unwilling to lump together the *sensus communis* of the Aristotelians, the *visio* of Latin theory, and *phantasia* as a reproductive and combinatory power. Important consequences ensued for *phantasia* when he distinguished between the simple impression, the phantasy proper, and the image in the service of reason, and denied to the first the name of 'phantasy.'⁴³

Of almost equal importance is his insistence upon the power of the will, first, in the trinity of the outward man to confuse impressions, often called 'phantasies,' with physical states, and, second, in the trinity of the inner man, to confuse these simple memory-images with phantasies resulting from them.

Although that phantasy also, which arises from the mind thinking of the appearance of a body that it has seen, consists of the similitude of the body which the memory retains, together with that which is thence formed in the eye of the mind that recollects; yet it so seems to be one and single, that it can only be discovered to be two by the judgment of reason, by which we understand that which remains in the memory, even when we think it from some other source, to be a different thing from that which is

⁴³ In *De Musica*, vi. 11, (*Patrol.*, 32. 1180), however, he calls the simple image *phantasia* and the product of the mind's operation *phantasma*: 'Haec igitur memoria quaecumque de motibus animi tenet, qui adversus passiones corporis acti sunt, *φαντασται* graece vocantur; nec invenio quid eas latine malim vocare: quas pro cognitis habere atque pro perceptis opinabilis vita est, constituta in ipso erroris introitu. . . Aliter enim cogito patrem meum quem saepe vidi, aliter avum quem nunquam vidi. Horum primum *phantasia* est, alterum *phantasma*. Illud in memoria invenio, hoc in eo motu animi, qui ex eis ortus est quos habet memoria. Quomodo autem oriantur haec, et invenire et explicare difficile est. Arbitror tamen, quod si nunquam humana corpora vidissem, nullo modo ea possem visibili specie cogitando figurare. Quod autem ex quod vidi facio, memoria facio: et tamen aliud est in memoria invenire *phantasiam*, aliud de memoria facere *phantasma*. Quae omnia vis animae potest. Sed vera etiam *phantasmate* habere pro cognitis, summus error est.' For the persistence of this distinction see St. Isidore, Bishop of Spain (570-638), *Differentiarum*, Lib. 1, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 83. 32: 'Inter *Phantasiam* et *Phan-*

brought into being when we remember, that is, come back again to the memory, and there find the same appearance.⁴⁶

Augustine is, of course, reproducing the distinction of Aristotle's *De Memoria*,⁴⁶ perhaps as handed down by Neoplatonists, and he is also using traditional material when he insists upon the supremacy of reason. His importance lies in his assertion that these errors of imagination are acts of will. 'But if that will which moves to and fro, hither and thither, the eye that is to be informed, and unites it when formed, shall have wholly converged to the inward phantasy . . . then so exact a likeness of the bodily species expressed from the memory is presented, that not even reason itself[can] discern whether the body itself is seen without, or only something of the kind thought of within.'⁴⁶ Phantasies such as these, supplanting the true memory-images, and often thought to have objective reality, result in both desire and aversion. They account for the fright of the man who cries out because he thinks that he sees something, the physical effects of lascivious thoughts, our beguilements in sleep, the hallucinations of the mad, the visions of the prophet, and ordinary reverie. But sometimes the mental picture leads, not to desire, but to avoidance: 'And hence, not only desire, but fear, causes both the bodily eye to be informed by the sensible things themselves, and the mental eye by the images of those sensible things.'⁴⁷ Here it is apparent that Augustine has in mind the Aristotelian distinction between instinctive acts and moral acts impelled by phantasy. The former he would call acts regulated by the simple sensory-image, the latter by phantasy proper. He makes no distinction between a moral and a non-moral phantasy, but, like the Stoics, insists that man is responsible for his reaction to his phantasies.

This careful distinction between external stimuli and the mind's operations upon them, and this insistence upon the freedom of the will prepare the way for a view of imagination as transcending the capacities of the simple reproductive faculty.

'I remember, no doubt, but one sun, because according to the fact, I have seen but one: but if I please, I conceive of two, or three. . . . I re-

⁴⁶ *De Trin.*, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 147.

⁴⁶ *Vide supra*, pp. 73-75.

⁴⁶ Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 148.

⁴⁷ *I. c.*, *c.*¹¹.

member it just as large as I saw it . . . yet I conceive of it as greater or as less according to my will.⁴⁸

A power of conception as transcending memory is the distinctive mark of imagination. This faculty of internal vision, the eye of the mind (*acies animi*), may only reproduce the pictures stored in the memory, and then it differs from memory only in function; but, in virtue of the freedom of the will, it may become a faculty of

diminution and addition . . . innate in the mind . . . which it cannot but carry with it whithersoever it turns (a faculty which may be observed especially in relation to numbers).⁴⁹ By the exercise of this faculty, if the image of a crow, for example, which is very familiar to the eye, be set before the eye of the mind, as it were, it may be brought, by the taking away of some features and the addition of others, to almost any image such as never was seen by the eye. By this faculty also it comes to pass, that when men's minds habitually ponder such things, figures of this kind force their way as it were unbidden into their thoughts. Therefore it is possible for the mind, by taking away, as has been said, some things from objects which the senses have brought within its knowledge, and by adding some things, to produce in the exercise of imagination that which, as a whole, was never within the observation of any of the senses; but the parts of it had all been within such observation, though found in a variety of different things: *e. g.*, when we were boys, born and brought up in an inland district, we could already form some idea of the sea . . . but the flavour of strawberries and of cherries could in no wise enter our conceptions before we tasted these fruits in Italy.⁵⁰

This is the same combinatory power which he describes in *De Trinitate* as resulting in the false phantasies of a black swan and a bird with four feet:

Neither do I remember a bird with four feet, because I never saw one; but I contemplate such a phantasy very easily, by adding to some winged shape such as I have seen, two other feet, such as I have likewise seen.⁵¹

These, according to the terminology of *De Musica*,⁵² he would have called 'false phantasms,' adopting language which the Stoic tradition would have suggested; but both here and in the letter to Nebridius he does not distinguish between the phantasy and the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 152.

⁴⁹ *Vide supra* p. 159.

⁵⁰ *Epistola*, vii, Chap. 3, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 1, 225-6.

⁵¹ *De Trin.*, 11, 10, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3, 154.

⁵² *Vide supra*, p. 161, footnote.

phantasm. The distinction is always between the simple image or impression or vision and the phantasy, the product of the eye of the mind, an internal power, not of sensation.

In estimating the significance and the influence of these passages one must view them in relation to the Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, and Stoic theories with which Augustine was probably familiar. It has sometimes been assumed that these utterances concerning a power capable of effecting new combinations is epoch-making because they constitute a recognition of the creative imagination.⁶³ This, however, is to ignore the continuity of thought and the mental habits of the great constructive thinkers of the early Middle Ages. Augustine was no innovator in the field of psychology: he made no new claims for imagination. He did, however, regard traditional material from a new point of view which changed the emphasis and resulted in new syntheses rather than in startling discoveries. The distinction between the impression and the phantasy was a familiar one,⁶⁴ although Augustine may have been the first to object to *phantasia* as a synonym of *visio* or *impressio*. Also traditional and suggestive of the empirical bases of both Stoic and Neoplatonic psychology is the insistence that the phantasy is derived from the simple image, that our imaginations are always based on experience. Both Neoplatonic and Stoic views would have led Augustine to a recognition of the problem of error involved in the formation of

⁶³ See Ambrosi, *La Psicologia della Immaginazione*, Roma, 1898, p. 36: 'Alla teoria dell'immaginazione rappresentativa, quale da niun altro fu stabilita meglio che da Aristotile, solo con S. Agostino si aggiunge esplicitamente quella dell'immaginazione combinatrice e creatrice quale la s'intende oggidè.'

See also his conclusion, pp. 50-1:

'A ogni modo, concludendo, la teoria dell'immaginazione fornitaci da S. Agostino è veramente notevole per profondità ed esattezza più di tutte le altre che l'hanno preceduta, poichè ha il merito:

1° di avere ben colto la natura di questa facoltà, che non si limita soltanto a riprodurre, nè soltanto a idealizzare il sensibile o a render sensibile l'intelligibile, ma anche (il che segna una delle sue note più caratteristiche) a combinare i dati sia sensibile che intelligibili;

2° di avere collocato tra i due ordini di percezioni sensitive e intellettive un ordine intermedio di rappresentazioni da lui dette *spirituali* e proprie dell'immaginazione; e più tardi Malebranche farà vedere la progressione ascendente nella forza con cui questi tre ordini ci colpiscono, secondo che si rivolgono all' intelletto, all'immaginazione o al senso;

3° infine, di avere cercato di ridurre agli affetti dell'immaginazione il sogno, il delirio, l'estasi e la maggior parte degli stati più o meno anormali del nostro spirito, mostrando la loro analogia cogli stati normali di cui non sono che una alterazione.'

⁶⁴ *Vide supra*, p. 69.

these phantasies from the materials given by the senses. Others had recognized the power of phantasy to make new combinations of these materials, to create chimaeras and castles in Spain, the idealizations of the sculptor and the distorted visions of the diseased.⁵⁵ The familiar passage concerning the lunatic, the lover, and the poet from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has its ultimate source in traditions older than Augustine, which he, like the great dramatist, skilfully embodied in language which could be understood. But neither Augustine nor Shakespeare conceived of the imagination as creative. To see how far the former was from our modern conception, we have only to reflect that, just as he denied that the simple mental image attendant upon sensation constituted a phantasy, so Ruskin denied that the recombining of images derived from experience constituted imagination.⁵⁶

What Augustine accomplished was to give new emphasis to the freedom of the imagination to make its own syntheses of sense-experience, to connect this with the freedom of the will, to make the creation of phantasies distinctly an affair of the 'inner eye.' In thus definitely rejecting both the bald dualism of the Platonists and the crude atomism of the Epicureans he seems to be following most closely the Aristotelian psychology of Plotinus and his fellows; but, in his constant insistence upon the moral problem involved in the freedom of our phantasy and the proper restraint by reason, he probably reveals indebtedness to an even more prevalent Stoic doctrine. Here his Christianity is at one with the moral impulse of Stoicism. Man is no victim of his impressions: a power of will enables him to be master of them, to transform them into phantasies conducive to right conduct, or into phantasms (in the language of *De Musica*) leading to his damnation. It is this conflict between the impulse of a Neoplatonist to indulge in keen psychological analysis and the impulse of a Christian acquainted with Stoic doctrine to make moral judgments of primary importance which causes Augustine in one work to sketch the phantasy as a power indispensable to the reader of history, to the poet, the mathematician, and the scientist, and in the *Confessions* to cry out:

Yet they [the Manichees] still set before me in those dishes glorious phantasms. . . . But those phantasms were not any way like to thee, as thou hast since spoken to me; for that those were corporeal phantasms

⁵⁵ *Vide supra*, pp. 102, 108, 109, 114.

⁵⁶ *Modern Painters*, Part III, §2, Chap. 2: *Of Imagination Associative*.

only, false bodies, than which these true bodies both celestial and terrestrial which with our fleshly sight we behold, are far more certain. These things the very beasts and birds discern as well as we, and they are much more certain than any we can imagine of ourselves. . . . How far then art thou from those fond phantasms of mine, the phantasms of those bodies which have at all no being! Than which the phantasies of those bodies which have real existence are far more certain.⁸⁷

Here the distinction between *phantasiae* and *phantasmata* is maintained, the latter having the connotation of the false and illusory. Better than these phantasms of the Manichees, says Augustine, their five elements, for instance, are the fables of poets and grammarians, Medea flying, for example, to which, at least, we do not give credence. Here one can see the connection, established in the letter to Nebridius, between poets and heretics. Here there is also something of the old dualism with its contrast of the spiritual and the worldly, reality and the unreality of phantasms. It is this point of view, perhaps the inheritance of Neoplatonism, perhaps of Stoicism, which is in conflict with the habits of mind of the empirical psychologist, which makes Augustine typical of the thought of the Middle Ages. Until we understand the paradoxical nature of that thought we are constantly at loss to explain apparent contradictions. A keenly analytical impulse, rarely equalled in the history of thought, caused the mediaeval thinker to refine upon a sensational psychology which derived from Aristotle, to describe, to differentiate, to classify mental powers with full recognition of their connection with physical states. Another impulse, the mystical, might at any moment cause him to deny the reality of the phenomena which his scientific impulse had led him to describe. Even at the moment of enthusiastic praise of a power essential to many kinds of thought Augustine stops short: 'And reason, indeed, proceeds still beyond, but phantasy does not follow her; as when reason announces the infinity of number also, which no vision of him who conceives according to corporeal things can apprehend.'⁸⁸

. This supremacy of the mystical tendency over the analytical, and the assumption of the mystic that reason should rule over all

⁸⁷ *St. Augustine's Confessions*, tr. by W. Watts, 2 vols., London, 1912, I. 117, (3. 4). The translation is in part my own. See also I. 333 (7. 1), and *De Vera Relig.*, 34, in *op. cit.*, 34. 150: 'O animae pervercae, date mihi qui videat sine ulla imaginatione visorum carnalium.'

⁸⁸ *De Trin.*, II. 10, in Schaff, *op. cit.*, 3. 154.

powers connected with the body, vitally affects his theory of vision in his commentary on Genesis.⁵⁹ Here his analysis of three kinds of vision is obviously related to his recognition of three kinds of phantasy or imagination in his letter to Nebridius. Corresponding to the sensory-image, the phantasy proper, and the phantasy in the service of reason he names a vision of sense, of imagination, and of intellect, or corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual.⁶⁰ Corporeal vision is clearly the capacity for receiving impressions, and is thus, in the technical language of *De Trinitate*, not imagination at all but *visio* or *sensus*; but in this treatise on vision the distinction between *visio* and *phantasia* is not maintained, and the impression, corporeal vision, is regarded as a type of imagination. Through this simplest power of vision one can see with bodily eyes heaven and earth and all that is therein.⁶¹ For instance, it helps one to understand the verse, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' by enabling one to see the letters on the page.

In the description of spiritual vision the phantasy proper of the letter to Nebridius is intended. By this power one is able to conceive of one's neighbor even when absent. By it we conceive of that which is absent in the body, for, though we see nothing with the bodily eyes, we retain in our minds corporeal images sometimes true to fact, just as we saw the bodies themselves and retained a memory-image of them, sometimes feigned, as our thought is able to form them. Vision of this second sort would include the mental picture of Carthage, with which Augustine was acquainted, and of Alexandria, which he had never seen.

The third and highest type of vision is quite different: it does not correspond to the phantasy in the service of reason, described in the letter, or to the highest rôle of imagination described in *De Trinitate*. In the description of intellectual vision as a capacity of reason transcending imagination the mystical impulse led to the assertion of the old dualism with its insistence upon the materiality of imagination. Between spiritual vision or imagination and intellectual there is a gulf: reason may transcend the realm of facts, but phantasy cannot follow. 'What is seen not imaginatively but in its own proper essence, and not by means of the physical, is seen in a kind of vision which surpasses all other kinds.'⁶² In

⁵⁹ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 34. 458 ff.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 12. 6-7, in *Patrol.*, 34. 458 f.

⁶¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶² See also 12. 14, and 12. 25.

helping us to comprehend the verse, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' it plays its part, not in the process of seeing the words, or imagining the neighbor, but, rather, through immediate insight (*contuitio*) by which love is conceived of by the intellect. The absent characters may be spiritually known, and the neighbor, present, corporeally perceived, (i. e. sense and imagination may suffice for the reading of the verse and the visualization of the neighbor); but love can neither be discerned in its own proper essence by bodily eyes, nor thought of by the spirit by means of an image like to the body, but can be known and perceived by the mind alone, that is, by intellect.⁶³ Intellectual vision occurs where no imaginary likenesses are involved. Man, the sun, and trees may be seen in their own form through corporeal vision or as absent objects through spiritual vision; but love can never be discerned as present in a body or in some image. 'If one thinks of it through corporeal images, in itself it is not discerned.' Here Augustine is so far from a doctrine of imaginative symbolism that, with the Platonic tradition generally, he thinks of spiritual vision as an impediment to the highest type.

His view of prophecy is consistent with this depreciation of visions of phantasy. Although, like Plutarch and Synesius, he recognizes imagination as a means to insight, he is unwilling to call it insight itself.⁶⁴ 'Even though signs have been shown to our spiritual natures through certain likenesses of bodily things, unless the mind has done its part, so that these signs are not merely seen but known, prophecy has not taken place. For the prophet is not so much the one who has seen, but one who has interpreted what another has seen.'⁶⁵ Powers of prophecy pertain more to mind than to spirit, more to intellect than to imagination, spirit being manifestly inferior to mind. Joseph was more truly a prophet, who knew what the seven ears of corn and the seven kine signified, than Pharaoh, who saw them in his dreams. 'The spirit of the latter was informed that he might see; the mind of the former was illuminated that he might know: in the one were the words, in the other prophecy. For in the one was the imagination of things, in the other the interpretation of that imagination.' The smaller, then, is the prophet who sees only signs, images in the spirit; the greater is he who is con-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12. 11.

⁶⁴ Like Plutarch and Synesius, Augustine is also interested in the power of demons over imagination, i.e. spiritual vision. See 12. 17, in *op. cit.*, 34. 467.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12. 9. 20, in *Patrol.*, 34. 461.

cerned with the knowledge of them; but the greatest of all is he who excels in both powers of imagination and of intellect that he may see in the spirit significant likenesses of corporeal objects, and in turn know these because of the liveliness of his mind. Daniel becomes for Augustine the highest type of prophet. Again one has the old contradiction: the imagination is essential to prophecy, but at the same time it is unideal.

There is, however, in this view the recognition of an evolutionary process: the body hands over its visions to spirit or imagination; and the imagination, in turn, if under the proper guidance of reason, ministers to the intellect, which is over it.⁶⁶ King Belshazzar saw with his bodily eyes the writing on the wall; a corresponding image was impressed upon his spirit; but still, although he saw in imagination, he did not know (*intellegebatur*). It was for Daniel through the prophetic power of mind, rather than of body or spirit, to cause the King to know the meaning of the sign. Imagination has its essential rôle, but a higher power must come in to give true understanding. Sometimes, if not under the guidance of the rational element, it will bring to an end any recognition of truth; but often it may become the means to insight. 'When the mind is suddenly alienated from the corporeal senses, and spiritual vision is occupied with images of corporeal objects, either in dreams or in ecstasy, if there is no signification in what is seen, these are imaginations of the mind; just as the waking and the sane, on the other hand, moved by no such alienation, turn over in the mind the images of many bodies which have never actually been present to sense.'⁶⁷ In this treatise on vision, as in the more formal psychology of *De Trinitate*, he insists that the phantasy of the productive rather than reproductive type may issue, according to the condition of the mind, in two very different results, the one illusory and dangerous, the other as necessary to thought as visions are necessary to prophecy. The latter he would call proper spiritual vision; but to products of wrong conditions of mind he applies the term 'imaginations' or 'phantasms.'

Thus Augustine, like others acquainted with the views of the Neoplatonists, is ever alive to the dangers of imagination. This is more evident in the treatise on Genesis than in the descriptive psychology of *De Trinitate*, because he is more freely describing

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. 11. 22.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12. 12. 26, in *Patrol.*, 34. 464.

under the term 'spiritual vision' the imagination as it contributes, or fails to contribute, to the insight of the Christian. This same term, more comprehensive because less precise, also includes as functions of imagination activities enumerated by Synesius in his account of phantasy, but ignored or barely mentioned in *De Trinitate* and the letter to Nebridius. It comprehends, for instance, the common sense: it enables the mind to have successive representations of the senses in relation to one another. This it is able to accomplish because it is not corporeal, but like to the corporeal.⁶⁸ All the various activities of spirit, midway between the purely mental and the purely physical, and at one time or another regarded as results of imagination, are brought together in a paragraph of summary suggestive of Synesius:

By it, whenever we come into contact by means of the bodily senses with any body, straightway there is formed a likeness in the spirit, and it is harbored up in the memory; or when we think of absent objects with which we are already acquainted, from these there is formed a certain spiritual aspect of them as they were in the spirit before we thought about them. . . . When we contemplate likenesses of those bodies which we have not known, yet of the existence of which we have no doubt, we know them, not as they really are, but as we suppose them to be. Again, when we think of things which neither exist nor are known to exist, we know them by will or opinion. Once more, in cases where without our will or act we have likenesses of corporeal objects in mind; or when any physical act is to be undertaken and we determine upon the probable consequences and anticipate all in thought; or in the act itself, either when we are saying or doing something,—all physical movements, as they are able to reveal themselves, are anticipated by their likenesses within the spirit. Neither can any syllable,—even the shortest,—be articulated in its order unless imagined. When dreams are seen by those sleeping, . . . the spirit so confuses bodily images with true bodies that they either are scarcely distinguishable or not at all. . . . Likewise, in some diseases . . . images of corporeal objects exist and are revealed, either with or without signification. Having no physical cause, but raised and seized by some spirit, the mind is borne to the contemplation of images of bodies of this kind, mingling with them corporeal visions, . . . or the spirit lifting it up, it is alienated from all physical sensation and is turned away to such an extent that in spiritual vision it is concerned only with likenesses of body, in which case I know not whether they seem to have any signification. This, then, is that spiritual nature in which are set forth, not bodies, but their likenesses. . . . So, then, although there

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 12. 16. 33, in *op. cit.*, 34. 467.

exist in the same mind visions which are known through the physical senses, . . . and likenesses of the body seen in the spirit, . . . and, finally, such as are known by the mind, being neither bodies nor likenesses of bodies, they have, nevertheless, their own order, and one is more excellent than another. For spiritual vision is superior to corporeal, and intellectual to spiritual. For corporeal vision cannot exist without spiritual . . . but, on the other hand, there can be spiritual without corporeal, since the likenesses of absent objects appear in the spirit. . . . Likewise, spiritual vision needs the intellectual that it may be judged; but the latter has no need of the lower spiritual. . . . Therefore, it is not absurd, I think, or unfitting, to put spiritual vision between corporeal and intellectual as a kind of mediating force. I think that it is not strange to call it a medium, since it is not a body but a likeness of body between that which is truly a body and that which is neither body nor the likeness of body.⁶⁹

Corporeal and spiritual visions may deceive us, but intellectual never. The navigator thinks that the stars are moving, and that the oar in the water is broken; but this is faulty corporeal vision. Similarly the mind may be deceived by spiritual visions, thinking that what it sees is in reality the external object. But intellectual vision never errs.

Spiritual vision, however, is capable of attaining a certain degree of truth. Sometimes our vision is human, sometimes divine, a divine power revealing likenesses of future events. The experience on Sinai (Ex. xix. 18) is an example of corporeal vision, and the Apocalypse of John and the experience recorded in Isaiah vi. 1 are examples of spiritual vision; but in Numbers xii. 8 there is a vision of the highest sort in which God is seen, not in terms of carnal sense, or, again, in spirit, in the assumed likeness of body, but in his own nature, as the rational and intellectual part of man is able to conceive of him, divorced from all bodily sense, and, in turn, from all puzzling spiritual significance.⁷⁰ This, for Augustine, as for Dante, is above all imagination.

It is apparent that the examples here are intended to correspond to the examples of three uses of imagination in the interpretation of the verse, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'⁷¹ There, however, it is primarily the psychologist who is speaking, describing the phantasy as a Stoic or a Neoplatonist brought up in the Aristotelian tradition would describe it, but with a capacity, perhaps, for finer distinctions

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 12. 23-24, in *op. cit.*, 34. 474-5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 12. 27 in *op. cit.*, 34. 477.

⁷¹ *Vide supra*, p. 168.

and more acute analysis than had been common. Here, however, the Christian bishop, true to another impulse which he might have inherited from Neoplatonism as a form of mysticism, is primarily interested, not in describing, but in evaluating: as a capacity for vision phantasy is more ideal than sensation, less ideal than intellect, under right conditions an aid to the highest type of vision, under wrong conditions the cause of the greatest mischief. Here, perhaps better than in any thinker of the Middle Ages, one can study these two impulses at work, the scientific with its empirical bases, going back to Aristotle, and the mystical, with its depreciation of that which is derived from experience, the inheritance of Platonism. These are the two forces which were to mold the theory of imagination during the Middle Ages. Had Augustine stopped with the descriptive psychology of *De Trinitate* and the letter to Nebridius, his weight upon one side might have been decisive; and, similarly, his theory of vision, studied apart from his formal psychology, would have had a very different and equally important influence. But he leaves two attitudes, reveals two habits of mind, is capable of molding the thought of two kinds of men: this for the history of imagination is a vital fact and makes the view of Augustine the first great mediaeval synthesis. That of Dante was to be the last.

Boethius (470-524) is considered at this point because he was a Christian whose view of imagination was profoundly influenced by Neoplatonism, and especially because his utterances suggest those of Augustine, both in terminology and in habit of classification. In an important passage in the *Consolation of Philosophy* in which he denotes the capacities of our mental faculties,⁷² although he writes of four powers, it is evident that he has in mind the familiar trilogy of Augustine: *sensus*, *imaginatio*, *ratio*, with *intelligentia* added, as a Neoplatonist would add it, and as many after Boethius were to add it, as a transcendent power, not essentially a part of the scheme of knowledge derived from the Aristotelian psychology:

Likewise sense, imagination, reason and understanding do diversely behold a man. For sense looketh upon his form as it is placed in matter or subject, the imagination discerneth it alone without matter, reason passeth beyond this also and considereth universally the species or kind

⁷² *Philosophiae Consolatio*, 5. 4, in Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, the tr. of 'I. T.' (1609) revised by H. F. Stewart, London, 1918, p. 389.

which is in particulars. The eye of the understanding is higher yet. For surpassing the compass of the whole world it beholdeth with the clear eye of the mind [*pura mentis acie*] that simple form in itself.

This is obviously like Augustine, save that *intelligentia* transcends reason, and the former, rather than imagination, is characterized as the 'eye of the mind.' What follows suggests the psychology of *De Genesi* even more.

In which that is chiefly to be considered, that the superior force of comprehending embraceth the inferior; but the inferior can by no means attain to the superior; for the sense hath no force out of matter, neither doth the imagination conceive universal species, nor is reason capable of the simple form, but the understanding, as it were looking downward, having conceived that form, discerneth of all things which are under it, but in that sort in which it apprehendeth that form which can be known by none of the other. For it knoweth the universality of reason, and the figure of imagination, and the materiality of sense, neither using reason, nor imagination, nor senses, but as it were formally beholding all things with that one twinkling of the mind. Likewise reason, when it considereth any universality, comprehendeth both imagination and sensible things without the use of either imagination or senses. . . . Imagination also, although it began by the senses of seeing and forming figures, yet when sense is absent it beholdeth sensible things, not after a sensible, but after an imaginary manner of knowledge.⁷³

In the subsequent argument against the notion that the mind is the passive recipient of impressions Boethius asserts that the mind does not merely receive 'passions' from without, but through her own power forms its own judgments concerning them; and, if the mind can do this in virtue of a power connected with the body, how much more can it do with powers free from all affections of the body?⁷⁴ It is reason, rather than sense and imagination, which is peculiar to man; and if the latter deny the universality of the knowledge possessed by reason on the ground that she must think in terms of the sensible and the imaginable, it is the business of reason to assert that 'she beholdeth in her universality all that which is sensible and imaginable, but they cannot aspire to the knowledge of universality, because their knowledge cannot surpass corporal figures and shapes.' In this argument wherein the higher power

⁷³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 389-391.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

always comprehends the lower, reason has the capacity for concrete representation without having recourse to imagination, without making use of a power having that name.⁷⁶ This is, perhaps, the most satisfactory way in which a thinker trained in the Neoplatonic tradition with a fear of the lower soul can, without repudiating the psychology of *De Anima*, show his distrust of a power connected with sense and appetite while still insisting that every thought has its appropriate phantasy. At least, the old dualism, with its two kinds of phantasy, is avoided; but this solution, we shall see, was destined to contribute to certain confusions as serious as those which it avoided.

This attitude is confirmed by a passage in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*.⁷⁶ In a chapter entitled *De Signis*, which considers the four elements involved in discourse, *res*, *intellectum*, *vocem*, and *litteras*, he refers to what were evidently prevalent views: 'Some think that sensations, and some that imaginations are denoted by words.' These notions, he thinks, are contradicted by Aristotle, who insists that matters of apprehension (*res subjectas*), both sensations and imaginations, are not denoted by nouns and verbs. This interpretation of Aristotle is based upon the distinction in *De Anima* between *νοήματα* and *αισθήματα*, translated by Boethius *intellectus* and *sensus*, involving the difference between *passiones animae* and *passiones corporis*. He who says that words signify affective states of mind is not speaking, he says, of sensations, for these are affective states of body, and this would be a confusion of *sensus* and *intellectus*. Boethius then turns to imagination: although it is an affair of the mind, it is to be doubted whether anyone would call imaginations, which the Greeks call *φαντασίας*,⁷⁷ affective states of mind. Aristotle is again quoted as carefully distinguishing between *νοήματα* and *φαντάσματα* on the ground that phantasy is not a matter of affirmation and negation, but that ideas involve truth and falsehood. In interpreting the statement that primary ideas

⁷⁶ This power of reason to think in terms of imagination without making use of the faculty itself is also glanced at in *Quomodo Substantiae*, 9 (tr. by Stewart and Rand in Boethius, *op. cit.*, p. 45): 'There are many things which can be separated by a mental process, though they cannot be separated in fact. No one, for instance, can actually separate a triangle or other mathematical figure from the underlying matter; but mentally one can consider a triangle and its properties apart from matter.'

⁷⁶ *Patrol. Lat.*, 64. 406.

⁷⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 106, 107, 158.

are not the same as phantasms but are not without phantasms⁷⁸ Boethius defines the primary idea as the conception of the simple object of thought, e.g. Socrates unpredicated, and he doubts whether such an idea, involving no judgment, is an idea; but if it be a question whether it is Socrates or someone else, then it is an idea,—an idea, which, however, exists in virtue of imagination.⁷⁹ 'For sense and imagination,' he adds, 'are kinds of primary figures upon which, as upon a kind of foundation, the intelligence, alighting, rests.'⁸⁰ For just as painters are wont to sketch the body and to lay a ground color upon the body where with whatever colors they choose they may delineate the features, so sense and imagination are laid as ground colors for mental perception. For when anything falls under sense or thought, it is first necessary that a kind of imagination be born. Afterward the more complete intellect comes in, explaining all of its parts which were confusedly taken for granted by imagination. Therefore imagination is something imperfect.⁸¹ Since nouns and verbs, he concludes, signify, not the defective but the perfect, Aristotle is right in asserting that they signify a quality, not of sense or of imagination, but of intellect.

Aristotle nowhere denies that speech is a matter of imagination. It is significant indication of the trend of mediaeval thought that thus early the love of the syllogism, the passion for new deductions often not warranted by the premises, and the eclecticism which was to result in a use of Aristotle which was to do violence to his *prima philosophia*, should have led to this distortion of his views. This is a notion which, had it prevailed, would have destroyed the roots of a constructive theory of imagination: on the one hand, it is asserted that, when predication comes in, it is intellect, not imagination, which is involved; and, on the other hand, that intellect can comprehend the capacity of imagination without making use of its specific faculty.

⁷⁸ Boethius quotes *De An.*, 3. 8 (432 a 9-14). For 'Ἡ οὐδ' ἄλλα φαντάσματα he reads 'Ἡ οὐδ' αὐτὰ φαντάσματα, thus ignoring any distinction between two kinds of phantasms, and, curiously, anticipating a proposed emendation of the text of *De Anima*. See Hick's *op. cit.*, p. 547-8, where it is noted that the ms. reading of Themistius' *Com. de Anima*, not followed by Heinze, his editor, is ταῦτα.

⁷⁹ 'Id enim quod hic sermo significat, quid est Socrates, vel alius, simplex non est quidem imaginatio, sed intellectus, qui intellectus praeter imaginationem fieri non potest.'

⁸⁰ Cf. Synesius, *supra*, p. 149.

⁸¹ *Patrol. Lat.*, 64. 407 For various interpretations of this Aristotelian dictum that every thought must have its phantasy, see pp. 91, 134, 139, 151, 159.

It is apparent that Boethius is indebted to Augustine: his use of the term *imaginatio*, his triad of *sensus*, *imaginatio*, and *intellectus*, his analysis of imagination as a middle term, and, finally, his reliance upon *De Trinitate* in at least one other work²² bind him to the Christian Neoplatonists, or, rather, to that tradition of the Christian Middle Ages which was to attempt in philosophy and psychology, even beyond what the great Neoplatonists had attempted, a synthesis of Platonic, Plotinian, and Aristotelian views. The different fortunes of Synesius, Augustine, and Boethius, in their attempted syntheses, the complete eclecticism of Synesius, the two points of view in Augustine, the one-sidedness of Boethius, are relatively indicative of the course of theory during the Middle Ages.

²² *De Trin.*, in Stewart and Rand, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

CHAPTER IX

MEDIAEVAL DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

There is no consistent mediaeval theory of imagination. If there is observable lack of agreement in the views of Neoplatonists and of early Christian writers influenced by them, still less is to be expected of the theories of the nine hundred years beginning with Augustine, when one must take into account, not alone the Neoplatonic synthesis of Platonic idealism and Aristotelian psychology, but also a direct indebtedness to that psychology, and to Stoicism, Gnosticism, and the dualism inherent in Christian theology. It is little wonder that in the thought of the Middle Ages there are more conflicting attitudes towards imagination than in Neoplatonism or Stoicism. Only the most systematic thinkers could from this mass of conflicting material with its various implications for the imagination effect a satisfactory synthesis. Augustine, as we have seen, came close to such a fusion, and, at the end of the period, Aquinas and Moses Maimon had similarly encyclopaedic minds. Finally, Dante, as we shall see, was to make the great mediaeval synthesis. Between Augustine and Dante come men of narrower range whose divergent, and often conflicting, views may be explained in part by recognizing, at the outset, two great, although not mutually exclusive, tendencies.

One of these, which we shall call the mystical, is profoundly indebted to Plato, Plotinus, and Porphyry: in its emphasis upon the reality of the supra-sensible world, and its depreciation of matter and works of the flesh it brings to the support of Pauline theology the emphatic dualism of the Neoplatonists, with a characteristic attitude towards phantasies as unreal and impediments to vision. Only in mystics with the greatest insight into the relation of the material to the spiritual would one expect an appreciation of the rôle of imagination in the apprehension of God-given phantasies. A few had, indeed, an appreciation of the use of imagination in allegory; but there was, on the whole, little place in their theories of vision for a power capable of giving physical expression to spiritual truths. One usually reads of intellect and intelligence as mental powers transcending sensation and imagination.

Extreme mystics, of course, could have no place in this study, since they denied the reality of the experiences denoted by 'imagination' and kindred terms. Many, however, were inconsistent in their willingness to describe supra-mundane experiences in terms of the prevailing Aristotelian psychology, largely sensational and empirical. Augustine, we have already observed, described our capacities for vision in language which Stoic and Neoplatonist alike had borrowed from Aristotle; and others after him, and probably because of his influence, were also to expound theories of mysticism in language which assumed a vital relation between phantasies and thoughts. These mystics, such as Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, although they did not attribute the highest functions to imagination, were to assume great significance in the continuation and elaboration of a tradition already studied in Augustine's theory of vision.

Augustine is also representative, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, of another tendency, to be studied, for instance, in the works of Averroes and Avicenna, Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, to describe all mental experiences under the assumptions of the reality of matter and the basis in sensation of much of our knowledge. This tradition, which, for want of a better term, we may call empirical, is interested in the orderly process of knowledge from percept to concept, and it is also interested in the physiological conditions underlying thought. It is this view, rather than that of the mystics, which was to become the popular mediaeval tradition, presumably because of its appeal to the love of system, of careful analysis, of subtle distinctions, and precise subordination. Its persistence is another indication of the popular preference of Aristotle to Plato, with the resulting failure to appreciate the subtle Platonic theory of imagination.

There is, of course, a certain arbitrariness in thus setting in opposition two kinds of thought rarely to be found completely divorced in the Middle Ages: but to separate them is to make one aware of the complex problem presented by attempts at fusion. Neither tendency by itself is capable of a great theory of imagination. The first inference is that any attempt at synthesis will be equally unsatisfactory; but this, it will be seen, is not true: the attempt in the Middle Ages to reconcile the impulses of the mystic and of the descriptive psychologist resulted in an appreciation of the imagination not for many years to be again achieved.

Since this empirical tradition is the more popular and persistent, and sometimes a kind of substratum for mystical theories, we shall first turn to it, and, in the following chapter, to the mystics and to notable attempts at synthesis.

The most common theories of imagination in the empirical tradition are to be found in the so-called faculty psychologies, wherein each mental power is assigned to its proper cell or ventricle in the head according to its function in an orderly process of cognition from the first sensation to the idea.¹ Since there will be occasion to describe a number of these systems, sufficiently diverse to be at first confusing, it may be well at the outset to describe a simple scheme substantially true for all thinkers whom we shall consider. According to the common notion, there are three internal powers (as distinguished from the five external powers or senses) residing in three cavities of the head. In the front cell or ventricle is imagination, affording a meeting place for separate sensations, thus constituting common sense, and forming the mental images necessary for thought, the work of imagination proper. In Greek theories *φαντασία* or *τὸ φανταστικόν* is the term used; in Latin *imaginatio* or *phantasia*, usually comprehending the function of *sensus communis*. Occasionally, however, *imaginatio* and *phantasia* are distinguished, and the latter is connected with the second cell. One usually reads that imagination, or, in the Greek *τὸ φανταστικόν*, occupies the foremost ventricle.²

According to this simple attempt at a physiological psychology the image produced in the first cell is handed over to the powers located in the central cavity, the cell *λογιστικόν* or *rationalis*, wherein resides the *vis cogitativa*, *intellectus*, or reason. In turn, the idea here formed is given into the custody of a power residing in the back of the head, the *vis memorativa*, which is thus a storehouse of ideas rather than images. In this scheme the memory is no longer, as in the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic psychology, a

¹ For the faculty psychology in general see G. S. Brett, *A History of Psychology*, 3 vols., London, 1912-1921, 2. 71-81; O. Klemm, *A History of Psychology*, tr. by Wilm and Pintner, New York, 1914, pp. 46-56; Max Dessoir, *Outlines of the History of Psychology*, tr. by Donald Fisher, New York, 1912, pp. 56-60; and H. Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie*, 2 vols., Gotha, 1880-1884, 2. 398 ff.

² For a simple description in the Greek see S. Joannes Damascenus (died *ante* 754), *De Fide Orthodoxo*, Lib. 2, in Migne, *Patrol Græca*, 94. 933: 'Concerning the phantastic power.'

mode of phantasy or imagination, but an important divorce has been effected: the simple imagination is a relic of sensation, a *recordatio sensus*, in a way a memory of impressions, while the memory proper has a distinctly higher subject matter. In comparison with its position in the systems of the Neoplatonists, imagination has suffered a distinct loss: in being placed in its proper compartment, not only an unnatural divorce of mental powers has been effected, but imagination has given up an important contact with ideas. So long as it was conceived of as a middle term, in part material, in part spiritual, there was always opportunity for the growth of constructive theory; but when the analytical tendency of the Middle Ages encloses imagination or phantasy within the confines of a cell or compartment of the brain, there is a tendency to ignore the participation of this faculty in the higher processes of cognition, and to confine it to a lower sphere quite as rigidly as did the Platonic dualism. It is little wonder that the common contrast was between imagination and reason, phantasy and intellect.³

One of the earliest of these faculty psychologies is to be found in the *Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου* (*De Natura Hominis*) of Nemesis of Emesa,⁴ a Syrian bishop who lived at the end of the fourth century. In the fifth chapter he enumerates the powers of the soul as τὸ φανταστικὸν καὶ διανοητικὸν καὶ μνημονευτικὸν. In the following chapter, concerning the first power, he reproduces and comments upon the Stoic distinction, already studied, between four words with the stem φαν-. This passage is so important for the study of the persistence of Stoic views and of mediaeval terminology that it is quoted at length in the mediaeval Latin version of Bishop Alfano of Salerno:

Phantastica igitur est virtus irrationalis animae per sensus operativa; phantaston autem, hoc est imaginabile, est quod phantasiae subiacet, ut sensus et sensibile; phantasia vero, id est imaginatio, est passio irrationalis animae ab aliquo imaginabili facta. Phantasma autem est passio inanis in irrationabilibus animae a nullo imaginabili facta. Sed Stoici IIII esse dicunt: phantasiam, phantaston, phantasticon, phantasma; phantasiam dicentes passionem animae apparentem in ipsa et quod fecit phantasiam,

³ See Siebeck, *op. cit.*, 2. 431; and Landauer, *Zeit. d. deutsch. morgen. Gesell.*, 26. 399.

⁴ Nemesis Emesenus, *De Natura Hominis*, Graece et Latine, ed. by C. F. Matthaei, Halae Magdeburgicae, 1802. For the Latin I have used *Nemesii Premnon Physicon, a N. Alfano Archiepiscopo Salerni in Latinum translatus*, ed. by C. Burkhard, Lipsiae, 1917.

phantaston. Quando enim album videmus, generatur quaedam passio animae ex susceptione eius. Ut enim in sensibus efficitur passio, cum senserint, sic et in anima, cum agnoverit. Imaginem enim in se suscipit agnitae rei. Phantaston autem, quod fecit phantasiam, et sensibile, ut album et omne, quod potest movere animam; phantasticon autem inanis receptio sine imaginabili; phantasma autem, quod accipimus per phantasticon, inanem susceptionem, ut in maniacis et melancholicis. Sed differentia in his circa solam diversitatem nominum facta est. Instrumenta vero eius sunt anteriores cerebri ventres et animalis spiritus, qui in ipsis est, et nervi, qui sunt ex ipsis rorantes animalem spiritum et compositio sensuum.⁵

This quotation and criticism of a Stoic tradition which derives from Aëtius has been the subject of investigation to determine the source of the views of Nemesius, and, although the inferences are not conclusive, they seem to point to a Neoplatonic intermediary.⁶ The significant difference, it is apparent, is in the conception of τὸ φανταστικόν, which, in the Stoic tradition, denoted the illusory quality of the image, and in Nemesius becomes a general and inclusive term. The latter was evidently in contact with a tradition, such as the Neoplatonic, more directly derived from the Aristotelian psychology, in which φαντασία and τὸ φανταστικόν, are synonymous. Nemesius is hardly justified in his lame conclusion that the difference is only one of names.

After noting that the instruments of this faculty are the foremost ventricle of the brain, the animal spirits, and the muscles, he enters, in the spirit of the physiological psychology which came down from Galen, upon a description of the five senses, for him a part of τὸ φανταστικόν. The next five chapters describe the five senses. Chapter XII indicates that the previous description was regarded as part of the analysis of phantasy; he summarizes thus: 'De phantastici igitur virtute et instrumentis et partibus partiumque communitate et differentia convenienti modo, ut in brevibus sufficienter dictum est.'⁷ He proceeds to a description of intellect and memory, resident respectively in the middle and back of the head. He is not ready, however, to call the memory a conservator of ideas, because Origen had called memory a 'phantasy stored up from sensible experience,'⁸ and Plato had defined it as a

⁵ Nemesius, tr. Alfano, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

⁶ See W. W. Jaeger, *Nemesius von Emesa*, Berlin, 1914, pp. 4 ff. See especially pp. 8-9.

⁷ Nemesius, tr. Alfano, p. 87.

⁸ *Loc. cit.* A variant reading for 'Origen' is 'Aristotle.'

conservator of *sensibilia*. But this, for Nemesius, on the authority of Plato, is a process of cognition, not of intellect proper. We remember, not the essences of things, but only what has been in our experience. There is therefore no remembrance of intelligibles through an antecedent phantasy, but through discipline and through natural talent. Nemesius evidently has in mind the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence: between this kind of memory and that which is connected with phantasy there is a gulf which the faculty psychology has only served to make the wider. Phantasy is concerned only with the less ideal types of thought.

In Avicenna (980-1037) one studies a typical development of this descriptive psychology. In the front of the head he places a primary internal power of common sense capable of comparing *sensibilia* and drawing conclusions concerning the object as a result of the testimony of more than one sense. These presentations imagination retains when the stimuli are no longer present. Common sense discerns when the *sensibilia* are present; imagination retains when the *sensibilia* are absent.⁹

In the middle of the head is a faculty, or a group of faculties, dealing with the materials handed over by imagination. Here the will comes into play, enabling the mind to compound and divide the *sensibilia* presented by common sense and retained by imagination according to the form seen. When intellect rules over this function, it is called *cogitativa*; when the *virtus animalis* rules, it is called *imaginativa*; and when it works by compounding and dividing, it is called *formativa*.¹⁰ It is this faculty which creates castles in Spain and feigns chimaeras, half-goat and half-deer. Both in dreams and in waking experience it often errs in making connections be-

⁹ See Albertus Magnus, *Sum. de Creat.*, 2, *Quaest.* 37, in *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, 38 vols., Paris, 1890-8, 35. 324-5; Dessoir, *op. cit.*, p. 57; and Le Bon Carra de Vaux, *Avicenne*, Paris, 1900, p. 213. The latter says that the word used for 'imagination' by the Arabic philosophers, 'el-motakhayilah,' corresponds to *αἰσθητικὴ*.

¹⁰ See also Carra de Vaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-5, where the term 'il-mosawirah' *formativa*, is used of the power of the second cell in all its aspects. This is, however, identified with 'el-khaial,' *phantasia*. This formative power, Carra de Vaux says, quoting *Nadjat* and *Icharat*, is followed by a power like an embryo of intelligence, called 'el-mofakkirah,' *cogitativa*, and 'el-motakhayilah,' *imaginativa*, and 'el-mokallidah,' *collectiva*, the rôle of which is the first process of abstracting, grouping, associating, and generalizing upon the presentations of the first cell. This power, as in the version of Albertus Magnus, resides in the front of the central cell.

tween the real and the apparent, e.g. assuming that copper is gold because both are red. When this power is moved by a phantasm in another as though the things were actually in existence, we call it *phantasia*; but when the transformations take place in sleep, we call it *imaginativa*.

In the back of the head, as in the other schemes, is the *vis memorativa*, which stands in much the same relation to cogitation as did imagination to common sense.¹¹

At first glance, Avicenna's views, in comparison with those of Nemesius, may seem to contradict what has been said concerning the orderly classifications of the faculty psychologies. Imagination seems to belong to both the first and second cells of the brain,—to the first as a kind of memory in respect to the common sense, and to the second as a means to conceptual thought, with *phantasia* as one of its modes of operation. In the second cell, moreover, the distinction between *imaginativa* and *phantasia* is surprising and, at first, perplexing. 'Phantasy' is used for the free play of the power, involving truth and falsehood, while 'imagination' is used for processes not involving to such a degree the responsibility of the will. In these tendencies to place imagination in both the first and second cells, and in the second to distinguish between two characteristic kinds of thought involving images, there is probably a better grasp of Aristotelian psychology than was common among the descriptive psychologists. There is, at least, an appreciation of two kinds of imagination or phantasy, resulting in a softening of the contrast of phantasy and intellect, and in an elaboration of the Aristotelian dictum that every thought must have its appropriate phantasy.

Yet one must remember that for Avicenna the *vis cogitativa* is the essential power of the central cell. *Imaginativa*, a power of recombining images derived from the first cell, is but one of its aspects, and *phantasia* is an especially untrustworthy one. It is the first cell which is essentially imaginative. The second is essentially cogitative, and it has, as necessary modes of operation, a *virtus imaginativa*, a combinatory capacity, a *virtus aestimativa*, or opinion, and *phantasia*, specifically concerned with dreams. In its main features this scheme is typical. In its departures from the ordinary formula it probably had much greater influence than the views of Nemesius

¹¹ Avicenna also closely connects psychology and physiology, noting the physical effect of dreams. See Albertus, *op. cit.*, 35. 364.

or of John of Damascus, or of the two men whom we are next to consider.

Honorius¹² (1090–1120) writes that the first cell is hot and dry, and is called *phantastica*, i. e. visual or imaginative, because it is the power of seeing and learning. It is hot and dry that it may seize upon the forms and colors of things. The central cell is called λογιστικόν rational, because in it is the power of discernment; whatever the phantastic cell makes a mental picture of it hands over to this power, whereby the mind discerns. This cell is hot and moist for the better discernment of the properties of things. The cell of memory is cold and dry that it may retain the better.

The physiological aspects of psychology also interest John of Salisbury (c. 1115–1180):

There is, in the front part of the head, in a cell which is called *phantastic*, a certain spirit even more subtle and more lively than the spirit diffused through the arteries. When the mind is functioning in that spirit as its instrument, it comprehends the form in the matter, the object being absent. This power of the mind is called imagination. . . . In this cell the spirit is thinner and more subtle, and when this part is functioning, it comprehends forms mingled with matter; nor does it perceive the truth of objects, but it discerns and seeks. For matter, being a substratum, cannot comprehend the truth of forms. . . . [The power which can do this] is called reason, and its cell is the rational cell.¹³

In the middle of the head, in a cell which he calls 'intellectual,' he places a power of discipline and one of intelligence. He does not proceed to describe memory, although at another point¹⁴ the familiar scheme is obviously in his mind as he enumerates seven mental powers: *animus*, *mens*, *imaginatio*, *opinio*, *ratio*, *intellectus*, and *memoria*. Here, in arranging a series of faculties leading to *intelligentia*, he has some difficulty in finding a place for memory. His description of imagination reveals further indebtedness to the familiar tradition:

Imagination is a power of the mind by which we perceive the figure and color of an absent object and the impression which comes from the senses, and especially from sight.

Sense has knowledge of the things that are [i.e. exist in the present];

¹² Honorius Augustodunensis, *De Philosophia Mundi*, in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 172. 95.

¹³ *De Septem Septenis*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 199. 953, quoting Hermes Mercurius.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 951.

imagination perceives both the things that are and the things that are not [i.e. that are past]. Imagination is necessary to man that he may not forget. Opinion has its source, sometimes in sense, sometimes in imagination, for, when the mind operates through its organs of sight or through imagination, thinking that the object is either this or that, other than it really is, then it is called false opinion.¹⁵

Averroes (1126–1198), who reproduces this psychological trilogy, is also interested, as an Aristotelian, in the relation between imagination and memory:

All memory and investigation depend on imagination. The affection of our power of memory comes from the affection of imagination. The functions of the two powers, however, are different. The function of memory is to cause an object to be present after it has been absent, and to regard that object as one which has been previously perceived and imagined. To judge that this mental presentation comes from something previously perceived and imagined is an act of intellect,—of cognition.¹⁶

There are, for Averroes, as for Augustine, three steps in elementary cognition: the formation of an image from sensory materials; an *intentio*, or application of the mind to this image; and a union of these two to determine the nature of the external object. There are, then, three powers concerned with the act of knowing: *imaginatio*, *memoria*, and *investigatio* or *cogitatio*. It is imagination, for instance, which makes possible in Daniel's experience the apprehension of the picture on the wall. Memory, the second power, gave him the permanent form of this image. He adds, 'That which exists in the memory is something more spiritual than that which exists in the faculty of imagination.'

These three functions are assigned to three parts of the brain according to the usual scheme. One might have anticipated, from Averroes' analysis, that imagination and memory would be contiguous; but the tradition of the faculty psychology is, by his

¹⁵ For other patristic writings embodying or suggesting this trilogy see Hugo of St. Victor, *De Unione Corporis et Spiritus*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 177. 287; and Robertus Pullus, *Sent.*, 8. 2. 15, in *op. cit.*, 186. 740. S. Maximus, *Scholia in Lib. de Divin. Nom.*, in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, 4. 201, distinguishes between phantasy (ἡ φανταστική) as reproductive (εἰκονιστική) and as productive or combinatory, phantasy proper. Cf. Albertus Magnus, *infra*, p. 189. Maximus also sharply contrasts νόησις and φαντασία. using the phraseology of the Stoics: phantasy is πάθος καὶ τύπωσις ἀναγγελτική αἰσθητοῦ τινος, ἢ ὡς αἰσθητοῦ τινος.

¹⁶ Averroes, *Libri Meteorum Aristot. cum com. Aver.*, London, n. d., Folio ccliii

time, too strong: imagination is in the foremost cell, and memory at the back of the head. In his commentary on *De Anima* he attempts to view the psychology of Aristotle as conforming to this scheme.¹⁷

In the commentary on *De Somno et Vigilia* he writes that, since dreams cannot be explained in terms of intellect and memory, one must fall back on imagination, for here is a faculty having the requisite function, a continual state of motion in its progress from one image to another. It also has this function in respect to the images which are in the memory and the passions in the common sense.¹⁸ In its processes, however, it may err: imagination is the cause of falsehood in our dreams.¹⁹ In our dream-states imagination seems to have a certain power over the passions remaining in the common sense,—passions or affective states coming from extrinsic *sensibilia*,—and over the images of sensible things as they are deposited in the memory or the intellect. As a result of this the imagination affords the power of presenting to the mind a similitude or idol of the thing desired. Thus he who is thirsty may imagine that he is drinking. Similar phenomena are those dreams which among physicians signify the predominance in the body of a single humor: to see fire is a sign of the predominance of choler, and to dream of water signifies the ascendancy of phlegm.²⁰

Imagination in dreams, however, is a first term, not a last. In the normal waking state the mind proceeds from the external stimulus through common sense to imagination. In dreams the process is reversed; the imagination of the sleeper is able to stimulate the particular sensation as though the external stimulus were present.²¹ Averroes is typical of the Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages in this as in other aspects of his theory of imagination.

¹⁷ In this commentary he insists, with Aristotle, that imagination is essentially different from sense, opinion, intellect, and memory. (See *op. cit.*, sub *De Anima*, 3. 3.) Imagination takes its materials from the senses. See also Albertus Magnus, *op. cit.*, 35. 325. One can imagine matters of memory which had once been matters of sensation. One is also able to feign imaginable forms the individual parts of which were never derived from sensible experience.

¹⁸ Averroes, *op. cit.*, fol. clx.

¹⁹ Compare S. Joannes Climacus, *Scala Paradisi*, in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, 88. 669: 'Dreaming is a movement of the mind when the body is at rest. Phantasy is a deception of the eyes when the mind is asleep. Phantasy is a state of the mind's being rapt from the body in its waking state; it is a vision without foundation in reality.' Cf. Avicenna, *supra*, p. 183.

²⁰ Averroes, *op. cit.*, fol. clvii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, fol. clv.

In Albertus Magnus (1206?-1280) we come to the most representative descriptive psychology of the Middle Ages. One sees in him the Aristotelian ideal of encyclopaedia, and a scientific interest in the description of mental powers, not dominated, as in passages from Augustine, by theological interests and points of view. Albert asks of a faculty its object, its organ, and its function.²² Like many others, he is under the impression that he is writing a psychology in harmony with *De Anima*; but, in reality, he has described a system to be explained only by reference to Augustine, Boethius, Avicenna, and Al-gazali,²³ and to certain mediaeval habits of thought. Yet he never follows servilely any mediaeval thinker; familiar as he is with the history of psychology, he often quotes for purposes of censure. His is the most interesting of the faculty psychologies because it gathers together the greatest wealth of material, is most critical, best typifies certain habits of thought decisive for the conception of our terms in the Middle Ages, and, finally, had probably the greatest influence upon the views of Aquinas and Dante.

In *De Apprehensione*,²⁴ a comparatively concise account, the organs of apprehension, as distinguished from those of comprehension or conceptual thought, are common sense, imagination, opinion, phantasy, and memory. Imagination is called the *virtus imaginativa* because the forms impressed upon it are images of external objects. Sometimes it is called *formalis* when we are thinking primarily of its power of retaining, devoid of matter, the forms apprehended

²² See *Sum. de Creat.*, 2. Q. 37 ff., in Albertus Magnus, *op. cit.*, 35. 323-335. See also H. Siebeck, *Zur Psychologie der Scholastik*, in *Archiv für Gesch. der Phil.*, Band II, (Berlin, 1889) 188-192.

²³ In this work, *De Homine* (*Summae de Creaturis*, Pars II), Albert, considering debatable matters in psychology, quotes authorities for conflicting views, and then offers his own solution. Among the authorities on imagination quoted are the following: Aristotle, the Stoics, Augustine, Boethius, Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus, Hilary, Constabulus, Al-gazali, and Avicenna.

He attributes to Al-gazali (1058?-1111) the following views: there are five internal senses, viz., common sense, imagination, opinion, phantasy, and memory. Common sense through its humidity is capable of receiving impressions, imagination through its dryness of retaining them. Phantasy is a faculty which compounds and divides, and by some is called 'cogitative.' Since it seeks its materials both in the repository of sensations, i.e. imagination, and in the repository of 'intentions,' i.e. memory, it must be situated between them, in the central cell. He also calls it a *virtus collativa*. See *op. cit.*, 35. 323-36.

²⁴ *De Apprehen.*, Pars III, in *op. cit.*, 5. 577 ff.; cf. the more extended account in *Sum. de Creat.*, 2, in *op. cit.*, 35. 306 ff.

by common sense. Sometimes we use the term *species* if we wish emphasis upon its spiritual rather than material character. Sometimes we speak of a *thesaurus* when we think of it as a repository.²⁵ Common sense, imagination, and memory, however, are all seen to be retentive powers; but the first retains the form with the matter, the second without, and memory always has the notion of time added. Common sense is a power of discernment, comparing sensations; and phantasy, he adds by way of anticipation, is another power of discernment, comparing both images and ideas. Imagination, however, has no such capacity for discernment; it is merely a faculty of retention and preservation, depending upon common sense for its primary images. It is not difficult to see that imagination in this analysis is being shorn of its powers.

It has, nevertheless, important functions in the service of other faculties. Reason, for instance, has need of schematic images, as in mathematics, where the intellect proceeds by imagining figures.²⁶ Imagination enables one to represent both quantity and figure. 'One having a pure and well disposed organ of imagination can make good images; and when one also has a subtle intellect, one can do much in mathematics.' Again, imaginations are combined and separated for the purpose of producing the effect of the terrible, the helpful, the harmful,—ideas always associated with sense impressions. Thus imagination, in lieu of a particular sense, comes into the service of the faculty productive of opinions. In much the same way it plays an important rôle in memory by recalling images of the past. It can also on occasion prepare images in the service of the common sense, as in revelations during sleep.

In speaking of the relation of imagination to dreams Albert ceases to adhere to a consistent use of the single term, *imaginatio*, and seemingly makes a concession to the popular use of *phantasia*. 'You hold that in every dream likenesses descend from the region of the phantasy to the organ of common sense. When there is evaporation a subtle, sublimated kind of blood goes from the organs of digestion to the brain, to the front of the head. . . . The motion of the phantasy is received as a sensible experience in sleep.' To this notion of his pupil Albert replies as Augustine replied to Nebridius, accepting for the time the term 'phantasy':

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, 5. 579; cf. 35. 323 ff.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, 5. 580.

You should know that from the motions of celestial bodies there result certain impressions which are signs of celestial motions in inferior bodies; and when the aforesaid impressions come to the imaginative faculty, there are represented there the imaginations of those effects which the celestial motions have set forth. These imaginations are given to the organ of common sense; and through these imaginations they are able to direct the mind to future happenings which the celestial motions have denoted. This takes place especially when one is free from occupations and delights of the flesh, and . . . especially when one is sleeping at night at about the hour when the processes of digestion are completed, for then the blood, freed from the region of the digestive organs, going to the brain, descends to the organ of common sense with the animal spirit, bearing images to the seat of imagination.²⁷

The third power, following imagination, is the faculty of opinions (*aestimativa*), which from the forms retained in the imagination seeks out the 'intentions' (*intentiones*) which were never in the original impressions, but are not separate from them. It is this power which enables one to decide whether a given individual is desirable or not, friend or enemy. Through this same faculty working with images the sheep recognizes its own offspring, flees from the wolf, and follows the dog as its guard. Opinion, in this version of the Aristotelian distinction, goes beyond imagination, for the latter begets no emotional experience. Imagination results in neither joy nor sadness, but opinion does. Imagination acts merely as a mirror for sensory images; opinion, working with these, determines upon courses of action, what to choose, and what to avoid. It is opinion, not imagination, which impels to action. It is to the brute what intellect is to man. This elaboration of the distinction of *De Anima* tends to ennoble opinion at the expense of imagination.²⁸

The fourth faculty is phantasy, the essential function of which is to compare, to unite, and to divide. With images, the products of imagination, and 'intentions,' the products of opinion, it works in the same way that common sense worked with the impressions from the individual organs of sense: sometimes it compares image with image, sometimes image with 'intention,' or 'intention' with 'intention'; and sometimes it separates them, always, as distinguished from the method of common sense, with the material content

²⁷ Cf. Augustine, *supra*, pp. 168-9, and Synesius, *supra*, pp. 149 ff.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, 5. 581; cf. *De Anima*, 3. 1. 7,8, in *op. cit.*, 5. 322-6.

absent. Thus phantasy, dealing with images, on the one hand, and their effects, on the other, higher conceptual states, finds itself a power midway between imagination, the repository of forms of external objects, and memory, the repository of 'intentions'. As a result, it is able to compound and divide either. It is this power which enables one to fancy a man with two heads, or a being with a human body, the head of a lion, and the tail of a horse.²⁹

Such a power cannot be called primarily sensory, but might better be termed a kind of reason or cognition, since it has a power of cognition greater than the mind possesses in *sensibilia*. It is therefore often referred to as *excogitativa*, its function being the knowledge and discernment of the true nature of things,—not, however, by mere affirmation and denial. It is both a kind of reason and the most noble of the apprehensive powers,—and, in turn, the most comprehensive, their formal unifying principle. Just as the external senses find a focus in common sense, so the internal powers of the mind, one in substance, many in diverse functions, meet in phantasy.³⁰

Despite this careful differentiation of imagination, opinion, and phantasy, Albert is alive to the importance of usage. The three terms, he says, are often used interchangeably. 'Phantasy,' he adds, is the inclusive term, as in the definition from Aristotle: 'Phantasy is a motion taking its rise in sensation.'³¹

Albert's imaginary pupil is made aptly to sum up the views of the teacher:

I conjecture, then, that just as the particular sense works with particular objects of sense by receiving and seeing them, and common sense works by bringing some together, dividing others, noting similarities and diversities, so with images of these imagination works. . . . Opinion is concerned with intentions, choosing among them, and from them initiating motion. With these phantasy works, compounding and dividing.

In this view *phantasia* seemingly has gained more than imagination lost, having assumed functions established by typical mediaeval psychologies in the central region of the brain, but by Avicenna assigned to imagination. It is *excogitativa*, a kind of

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, 5, 583 ff.; cf. 35, 330 ff. Albert also instances the *tragelephum*, the *hircocervum*, and the *chimaera*. Cf. Avicenna, *supra*, p. 183, where *phantasia* refers to the free play of imagination in the waking state.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 5, 584; cf. 35, 334.

³¹ *Loc. cit.*; cf. 35, 328.

reason in man, and in brutes it takes the place of reason. By this power they prepare against the winter, the ant, for instance, storing up food.³² Some animals, however, have no phantasy on account of the structure of the brain. In some, for example, there is a cold marrow, in which there is only a faculty of sensation and a very slight power of imagination.³³

To be of true service to man phantasy must always be subservient to reason.³⁴ It is a faculty which often impedes rather than aids intellect, because it sometimes excessively occupies the mind with the composition and division of images and 'intentions.' It is able not only to compound elements derived from sensation but to feign elements like them. Besides, impressions made in the intellect are frequently unlike the images and fictions of the phantasy, and from images and fictions of this sort error and deception often result. One must also keep in mind that dreams prophetically revealing the future cause illusions because they are accepted as likenesses of external reality. Thus the work of phantasy results in deception and error: the mind, while it has need of phantasy, by clinging to phantasms is often distracted from spiritual objects.³⁵ In its relation to common sense, also, the phantasy sometimes errs by not insisting that the impression derived from the lower power be measured by the standard of objective truth. The third reason for regarding phantasies as subject to error is most curious:

Phantasy is corrupted when the front of the head is injured or disturbed by infirmity or by an accident, as happens in certain diseases in which indeterminate phantasies are multiplied. In just the same way, when the back of the head is injured, memory is weakened, and there follows a weakening of the powers of cognition and reason.³⁶

The view of memory is important only for the comparison with imagination. It is a preserver of the 'intentions' which opinion apprehends, a repository of these in the same sense in which imagination is a repository and conservator of impressions. Imagination and memory do not differ save in respect to their objects.³⁷ Imagination is a passive power which receives; memory is active, since

³² *Op. cit.*, 5. 585; cf. 3. 324 (*De An.*, 3. 1. 7) where Albert brands as inaccurate the translation of Aristotle denying phantasy to ants and bees. *Vide supra*, p. 68.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, 5. 584.

³⁵ *Vide supra*, p. 169.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, 5. 585; cf. 35. 335 (*Sum. de Creat.*, 2. 38. 5).

³⁷ *Loc. cit.*

there is an act of reference beyond the 'intention' and the image to the thing itself. The one preserves images, the other ideas, with an added sense of time.

The account in *De Homine*, in substantial agreement with this, in some respects is supplementary. The tripartite division of the brain is presented in its baldest form. In the front of the brain is the organ of imagination, divided into three parts: common sense, imagination proper, phantasy and opinion. The first part is in that part of the cell nearest to the channels of sense. Imagination proper is in the central portion, which is dry rather than humid. In the last part are phantasy and opinion.³⁸ The most significant difference in this account concerns the order of functioning of these two powers.

Albert's contribution to the faculty psychology is his division of the imaginative functions into four separate but closely allied faculties: common sense, imagination in the narrowest sense, phantasy, and opinion. Here his indebtedness to the great Aristotelians, including Avicenna, leads to a new emphasis upon the distinctions of *De Anima*: common sense is sharply defined as the simplest image-making function; and sense, phantasy, and opinion, in turn, are sharply divorced. Upon the basis of this psychology the Middle Ages made the second great distinction between phantasy and imagination,—a distinction, it is to be noted, quite different from that of the Dialogues. Whether the phantasy be in the second cell, as in Avicenna, or in the first, as in Albert, it is coming to be thought of as a power capable of freely combining the materials furnished by the imagination. Had this tradition obtained, phantasy, not imagination, would have been the name of the higher, creative power.

The *De Homine* throws further light upon Albert's aim in carefully distinguishing functions: certain thinkers had failed to make what for him were vital distinctions. He was not only conscious

³⁸ *Sum. de Creat.*, 2. 38. 3, in *op. cit.*, 35. 333. Albert quotes Al-gazali as having placed phantasy in the central cell. This conception Albert attempts to disprove by ingenious reasoning: when the front of the head is harmed, the imagination and the phantasy suffer. They could not be harmed if they were not in the front of the head. Therefore phantasy is not in the middle of the head but in the front. Albert is also familiar with Boethius, and Constabulus, *De Differentia Spiritus et Animae*, where the mental powers were evidently grouped as follows: common sense and phantasy in front; cogitation, cognition, and foresight in the middle; and memory and reminiscence in the rear.

that his own definitions were at times at variance with usage, but he thought that Avicenna and Al-gazali failed to make vital distinctions between common sense and imagination, and sometimes between imagination and memory.³⁹ He was also conscious that there is little basis in Aristotle for his distinction between imagination and phantasy.⁴⁰

With previous distinctions he seems well acquainted, especially with the Stoic tradition transmitted by Aëtius, Plutarch, pseudo-Galen, and Nemesius.⁴¹ He refers to the distinction made by John of Damascus: imagination is a power of the irrational mind functioning by means of sense, and is sometimes called *sensus*; while phantasy is a contentless effect without a cause. He is obviously translating John of Damascus (died c. 754) *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Liber 2: *φανταστικόν ἐστι δύναμις τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, διὰ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἐνεργούσα, ἥτις λέγεται αἴσθησις. . . . φαντασία δέ ἐστι πάθος τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, ὑπὸ φανταστοῦ τινος γινόμενον. φάντασμα δὲ, πάθος διάκενον ἐν τοῖς ἀλόγοις τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπ' οὐδενὸς φανταστοῦ γινόμενον.*⁴² Albert evidently translates *φαντασία* by *imaginatio*, *φάντασμα* by *phantasia*. The passage is an important document in pointing to a Stoic source of a mediaeval differentiation of *imaginatio* and *phantasia*. The translation, at least, affords the first instance of a distinction involving Latin *imaginatio*,—a distinction which, in the faculty psychology, has important consequences for later theory.

The quotation from Gregory of Nyssa (335–395), immediately following, confirms this view of the indebtedness of the faculty psychology to Stoic distinctions. Albert, after noting that Gregory divides the lower faculties into four, viz., sense, imagination, intelligence, and memory, adds:

And, moreover, he says that the Stoics taught that this faculty comprehends four, namely, *imaginationem*, *imaginabile*, *imaginativum*, and *phantasiam*. Imagination is excited by something imaginable; the imaginable is something which produces the effect; *imaginativum* is the power which draws images for itself; phantasy results when according to the power called *imaginativa* we draw an unsubstantial figment, as in the cases of the diseased and melancholy.⁴³

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 35. 323–4.

⁴⁰ He is aware, however, of the distinction in *De Mem.* between the animal as likeness and as object of thought. *Vide supra*, p. 74.

⁴¹ *Vide supra*, p. 89.

⁴² S. Joannes Damascenus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Lib. 2, in *Patrol. Graeca*, 94. 933.

⁴³ Albert, *op. cit.*, 35. 324. *Vide supra*, p. 180. I have not found the Greek original.

Here *imaginatio* is evidently the Latin equivalent of τὸ φανταστικόν, *imaginabile* of φανταστέον, *imaginativum* (usually *vis imaginativa*) of φαντασία, and *phantasia* of φάντασμα. Here the substitution of three Latin terms built upon the stem *imag-* for three terms having the stem *φαν-* results in a distinction between imagination and phantasy, which, although different from that of Albert, has much the same effect. Although Gregory distinguishes *imaginativa* from *imaginatio* in the same way in which Albert distinguishes *phantasia* from *imaginatio*, the former also calls the product of *imaginativa* a phantasy. 'Imagination' is thus connected with actual experience, 'phantasy' with the free play of the mind, resulting in combinations of experience never observed in reality, and often illusory and dangerous. Thus the Latin translation of Stoic terms and the development of Aristotelian psychology both served to accentuate the contrast first observed in Plato between the imaginative and the fanciful. When we try to account for the modern distinction between fancy and imagination, we must ever keep in mind that in the Middle Ages there were three traditions, the Platonic, the Aristotelian, and the Stoic, which, making use of terms derived from Latin *imago*, thought of the imagination as passive, at best a reproductive function, of phantasy as the power which deals freely with the materials of experience, and hence, in that respect, creative. The distinctions of John of Damascus, Gregory, and Albert, while by no means identical, point to a linguistic consciousness unfavorable to any exaltation of imagination at the expense of phantasy; to understand the distinctions of the early nineteenth century it is necessary to understand this feeling of the Middle Ages concerning the trustworthiness of images as opposed to fancies,—a feeling for instance, which Coleridge understood, and which kept him from accepting Wordsworth's distinction. The ennoblement of 'imagination' in the nineteenth century appears to be of the nature of a notable victory: the newer linguistic consciousness comes only after a long process of redefinition of the 'image.' Henceforth we may regard the history of the two terms as something in the nature of a struggle between two conceptions of images based upon differing philosophies of life. Modern philosophy, more thoroughly defining the creative nature of thought, was to describe the creative function of imagination as nobler than the capacity of fancy to deal freely with the materials supplied by the senses.

Albert's system is the best example of the evolution in mediaeval thought of the view of imagination deriving from Aristotle. In it one may study the typical eclecticism: the Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Stoic elements, and the indebtedness to Augustine and the great Arabian commentators. One may also observe characteristic habits of classification, nice differentiation, and definition, not in absolute terms, but according to powers, functions, and objects. This resulted in theories which, although they attempted to reproduce the views of Aristotle's *De Anima*, indulged in new analyses and a further description of processes, often the result of acute observations. But these processes, it must be noted, are observed in comparatively limited fields: not in fine art, or in science proper, or in education, but in a somewhat detached physiological psychology, a very abstract ethics, and in theology. This limitation of interests, in comparison, for instance, with the Platonic view, is no small factor in determining the course of the history of the terms.⁴⁴

The psychology of Roger Bacon (c. 1214-1292) is also typical of the empirical tradition; but it is more critical than that of Albert and his fellows. His main authority for his view of imagination is Avicenna, with occasional reference to Averroes.

Bacon is, perhaps, more materialistic—at least in his point of departure—than any who have gone before. He begins with the statement that scientists are agreed that the brain is wrapped up in two coverings: one the *pia mater*, contiguous to the brain; the other the *dura mater*, which adheres to the cavity of the head called the cranium. The former, the softer and more agreeable, in which phlegm is predominant, has three divisions called chambers, cells, or parts. 'In the first cell are two powers: common sense, in the very front of that cell, is, as Avicenna says, a kind of fount in respect to the particular senses, or a centre in respect to the lines radiating from that point to the circumference, according to Aristotle. This power judges concerning simple sensations. Its function is to receive the forms coming from the particular senses, and to render a judgment concerning them. But these forms, according to Avicenna,

⁴⁴ The student of mediaeval philosophy would naturally expect at this point a treatment of the views of the greatest Christian Aristotelian, Thomas Aquinas; but his theory, and that of the great Jewish thinker, Moses ben Maimon, are described at the end of the next chapter (pp. 210 ff.) since they are important syntheses of empirical and mystical elements.

it does not retain because of the insufficient moistness of its instrument. It is therefore needful that there should be another mental power in the last part of the first cell the function of which it is to retain these forms. This it is able to do because of its humidity and dryness. This faculty is called *imaginatio*. It is the treasury or repository of common sense, according to Avicenna, who refers to the example of the seal, the form of which water easily receives but does not retain because of its excessive humidity. Wax, however, retains the impression in good style because its humidity is tempered by dryness. Whence it is said that the one receives, the other retains. This goes on in the organ of common sense and imagination.⁴⁶

Bacon, however, calls this first cell *phantasia*, 'for, according to the second [third?] book of *De Anima*, *De Somno*, and *De Sensu*, it is evident that phantasy and common sense are alike in respect to their subjects, different in their essence, . . . and that phantasy and imagination are alike in respect to subject, different according to essence. Phantasy, then, comprehends both terms, differing from them only as the whole differs from the part; and since common sense receives the form, and imagination retains it, there follows a thorough verdict concerning the external object, which is the work of phantasy.'⁴⁸

Then comes the familiar reference to the actions of brutes in naturally seeking their own good and avoiding harm, as indicative of the functioning of a power different both from sensation and intellect, opinion (*aestimatio* or *virtus aestimativa*), a faculty more noble than sense or imagination. Here Bacon is obviously following Avicenna's account of Aristotelian psychology. But opinion, Bacon adds, does not retain the form; it merely receives it, in the same way that common sense receives the impression. There is need of another faculty in the last part of the last cell, capable of retaining the forms received by opinion, acting as a strong box or repository, just as imagination was a treasury of the forms of common sense.⁴⁷

Cogitatio or *virtus cogitativa*, in the central cell, is mistress of the sensitive powers, and in brutes takes the place of reason. It is sometimes called *logistica*,⁴⁸ i.e. rational, not because it makes use

⁴⁶ *The 'Opus Majus' of Roger Bacon*, ed. by J. H. Bridges, 3 vols., Oxford, 1897-1900, 2. 4. Cf. Al-gazali, *supra*, p. 187, note 23.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, 2. 4-5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2. 7-9.

⁴⁸ *Vide* Honorius, *supra*, p. 184.

of reason, but because it is the highest function of brutes, just as reason is the highest function of man, and because with it the rational faculty in man has immediate connection. By means of this power the spider makes its web of geometrical design, and the bee his hexagonal cell. Through this same power man in dreams sees wonderful things; and to it all the powers of the sensitive mind are subservient. For the forms of imagination are multiplied in cogitation. In imagination the forms are according to their first essence, because of the nature of phantasy; but cogitation has more noble forms, both those of opinion and those of memory. Hence cogitation makes use of all powers as its instruments.⁴⁹

Common sense and imagination in the first cell, that of phantasy; cogitation in the middle; and opinion and memory in the rear: this is Bacon's scheme. Although this is evidently the result of the Aristotelian tradition which we have studied in the Arabian commentators and in Albert, certain changes are noteworthy: imagination and phantasy are not differentiated; opinion, according to its position, is divorced from phantasy; and cogitation has taken over the functions ascribed by Albert to phantasy. It is also to be noted that the powers of the three cells do not comprehend the highest kind of thought: *cogitatio* is a quality which brutes may possess, and distinctly lower than *ratio*, to say nothing of the mystic's *intelligentia*. All of this works against a loftier view, either of imagination or of phantasy.

Most unfavorable to phantasy, of course, is the appropriation by the *virtus cogitativa* of powers ascribed to it. Here the mediaeval tendency to make fine distinctions, to assign to separate faculties their precise functions, resulted in a distinct loss for phantasy. Bacon is equally certain that cogitation and opinion are distinct, just as Aristotle had been certain that phantasy and opinion were not to be confused. In keeping with the division into three cells, he insists, there must be three diverse functions; diversity of objects indicates a diversity of functions. There are two kinds of sensible objects: the external, and the internal, dependent upon these. Hence there must be two kinds of sense: one comprehending the particular senses, common sense, and imagination; and the other comprehending opinion and memory. Cogitation, because of the nobility of its operations in comparison with the other faculties, is

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. 9; Cf. 2. 128.

carefully to be distinguished from them.⁵⁰ Again, the habit of drawing sharp lines of demarcation has important consequences for the definition of 'phantasy.'

This tendency causes him to defend vigorously the view that opinion along with memory is to be found in the concavity in the back of the head.⁵¹ It also leads him to take issue with a notion attributed to Augustine and the theologians that memory, intelligence, and will are aspects of imagination.⁵² The same insistence upon right method in definition leads to an attack upon the current Latin version of Aristotle. In this translation, he says, any power of memory which has the capacity for retaining forms, a repository of common sense as well as opinion, is called 'memory.' Therefore, what is called 'imagination' is comprehended under the term 'memory.' 'Without doubt,' he adds, 'memory should be twofold, so that there will be one repository for common sense, another for opinion, and these two kinds of memory will be diverse in form, subject, organ, and function.'⁵³ Here Bacon, expounding an Aristotelian doctrine handed down by the great commentators, in replying to the confusion of imagination and memory reproduces the familiar view of two kinds of memory, without, however, the important corollary of two concomitant kinds of phantasy. .

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2. 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Obviously evidence of a corrupt tradition of *De Trin.* rather than any misunderstanding.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER X

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MYSTICS

The theories which we have been describing spring, for the most part, from men who are bent upon scientific analysis: they classify, separate, and define, sometimes, indeed, arbitrarily, but always with an eye to functions. Psychology becomes a descriptive science, interesting apart from its bearing upon metaphysical and theological problems: the analysis of each mental habit is interesting for its own sake. Such thinkers, of course, while assuming the reality of the world of sensible experience, also believed in the greater reality of a realm of ideas; but between these two worlds they saw no gulf involving intricate metaphysical problems. Psychology, for them, had completed its most important task when it had described the way from the simple impression to the concept, from apprehension to comprehension. In their accounts, we have seen, phantasy and imagination find a definite place between the material and the immaterial, and partake of the nature of both.

A portion of this creed seems also to have been the belief of the mystics. The Victorines, for instance, seem to have been familiar with the faculty psychology. But Hugo and Richard, Isaac of Stella and John of Salisbury, were not primarily interested in descriptive psychology, save as it helped one to understand the experience called *contemplatio* or *visio* in the highest sense. Man's primary concern is not with the world of phenomena, not with *investigatio* or with *cogitatio*, the thought which takes its rise in impressions, but with *contemplatio*, having to do with that which is beyond sensible experience. Man may have certain uses for his senses, and the internal powers of the three cells may be of aid in interpreting the messages of the senses; but there is a higher kind of knowledge which cannot be said to issue from the lower stages of thought. There is a kind of vision of the bodily eye, and, again, a kind of the inner eye when we remember; and then there is a third transcendent kind, as when Moses saw God. The mystic is interested in the faculties concerned with experience in so far as they contribute to or impede vision of the highest sort; in this respect it is a critical psychology which indicates relative values. Sometimes it

has a relatively high opinion of phantasy and imagination, often one comparatively low, but always, one may anticipate, something short of the highest.

Much of this characterization, it will be noted, applies to portions of Augustine's theory. His conception is quite as much the source of the views of the mystics as of the descriptive psychologists already examined; it is the great, architectonic mind which thus brings to bear upon its thought about the imagination a sympathetic understanding of the best thought of the past, of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Neoplatonists, and transmits its synthesis to succeeding thinkers. In turn, as we follow the thought of the mystics as it finds typical expression in Dante, we shall observe again this tendency in the great, encyclopaedic thinkers to unite the two traditions.

For a mystic such as Hugo of St. Victor (c. 1078-1141) the highest aspiration is for communion with God; there must be perfect union between God and the spiritual man, and, to achieve this result, between the spiritual man and the physical. There must be a descent and an ascent: a descent by God, as to Moses, an ascent to God, as by Moses. God descends in revelation, making possible theophany; man ascends in contemplation, bringing about intelligence.¹

Before this state can be achieved, however, there must be a similar connection between body and spirit. Jacob's ladder, which enabled him to see God, one must remember, rested on the earth; for contemplation certain material bases must be recognized. If man is to ascend through the spiritual to God, by means of contemplation on the part of one, and revelation on the part of the other, there must be a similar basic and complementary relation established between body and spirit by what Hugo curiously calls *sensualitas*, by which he indicates the contact of spirit with matter, and its necessary precedent faculty, *sensus*. *Sensualitas* and *sensus*, in the relation of body and spirit, are analogous to *contemplatio* and *revelatio* in the higher ascent from spirit to God. Significant for us is the fact that Hugo calls the instrument of *sensualitas* the imagination; and this for him is in turn dependent upon *sensus*.

His description of imagination reminds one of Augustine and Albert: by means of the rays of vision there comes to the eyes the

¹ *De Unione Corporis et Spiritus*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 177. 285.

form of the external object to be perceived. Thence, through the seven folds of the eyes and the three humors, it comes to the brain, and an imagination is effected. Afterwards, this imagination, going from the front of the head to the middle, comes in contact with the substance of rational mind, exciting a power of judgment. Thus, while retaining the nature and propriety of body, it is joined to spirit. So the body is sublimated to the spirit, and spirit is humbled to body. Thus imagination is the similitude of sense, in its highest capacity informing the corporeal spirit, in its lowest, rational body, and touching upon reason.²

In brutes this imagination does not transcend the cells of phantasy, to which the simple presentations of the senses had been brought.³ In rational beings, however, imagination is in the service of reason; she is the true handmaid of reason. 'Nothing in the body is higher or nearer to the spiritual nature than what the force of imagination, coming after sense, and beyond the reach of the senses, conceives. What is more sublime than this is reason. The igneous force⁴, at any rate, which, when extrinsically formed, is termed 'sense' is called 'imagination' when brought within in the same form.'⁵

For Hugo the universe is a rational whole subject to the interpretation of human reason. Viewed as an aggregate of material parts, it is merely a matter for the senses; but, when brought within the domain of man's understanding, it becomes the subject matter of imagination—the imagination, not of the brute, but of the man of reason. Had Hugo been interested in the problem of aesthetic, he might have been, like Plotinus, another forerunner of the so-called 'romantic' poets: his notion of the imaginative interpretation of nature has something in common with the conceptions of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Imagination is not yet reason in her most exalted mood; but for this mystic imagination, subordinated to reason, is at least a power which makes possible the interpretation of a rational universe.

This is, however, far from modern theory.

Rational substance is corporeal light; imagination, which is a similitude of body, is shade. Imagination ascends to reason as shadow comes to light;

² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁴ Fire had just been described allegorically as one of three spiritual forces in the physical being.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

sometimes it is made manifest, sometimes it obscures. Reason uses imagination as a vestment outside and around it; if reason becomes too pleased with its dress, imagination, this imagination adheres to it like a skin; separation is effected only with great pain. . . . The mind delighted with body in this wise is deformed by the phantasies of corporeal imagination, and impressed deeply with these, it is not able to sever its union with the body.⁶

Here is another Neoplatonist, like Synesius, with a theory of vision in terms of 'imagination.'⁷ Because imagination partakes of the nature of both matter and spirit, it enables man to see the physical universe as the reflection of thought,—the thought of God; but, because this power participates in matter, it is also a hindrance to the most ideal functions. Once more the old dualism stands in the way of a great, constructive theory of imagination.

For Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), as for Hugo, there is a primary interest, not in the description of the imagination, but in finding its relation to the highest of activities, contemplation. In his first analysis of faculties and functions imagination is not regarded as even the lowest kind of contemplation, but, rather, an instrument of thought, the function of which is a kind of wandering, just as reason, a kind of meditation, has as its function investigation, and intelligence, by means of contemplation, aims at wonder.⁸

The terms, however, one soon discovers, are not mutually exclusive. *Contemplatio* seems to be an inclusive term; and *imaginatio* turns out to be one of its six varieties. The first is called 'in imagination and according to imagination': through this we are wont merely to gaze at visible objects, allowing the mind to run hither and thither, indulging neither in questioning nor in investigation.⁹ Through the second, 'by imagination according to reason,' we begin to analyze what we have seen. In the third, 'in reason according to imagination,' through the likeness of visible objects

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁷ *Vide supra*, pp. 149 ff.

⁸ Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Major*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 196. 67: 'In cogitatione evagatio, in meditatione investigatio, in contemplatione admiratio. Ex imaginatione cogitatio, ex ratione meditatio, ex intelligentia contemplatio. Ecce tria ista, imaginatio, ratio, intelligentia. Intelligentia obtinet supremum locum, imaginatio infimum, ratio medium.' Here the mystic substitutes for the familiar trilogy, imagination, reason, memory, another trilogy of imagination, reason, and intelligence, in which the first-named is still the least ideal term.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

we raise ourselves up to speculation about things invisible; reason by means of imagination raises itself to the invisible by contemplating the visible.¹⁰

In his allegory, the *Benjamin Minor*, Richard likens this relation between reason and imagination to the relation between mistress and handmaid. Reason, the mistress, must keep in contact with the world of the senses; but it is not fitting to think of direct contact: 'it is not proper for a daughter young and tender to go running about outside, or for a servant [such as one of the senses] to be irreverently bursting into her mistress's recesses.' Therefore imagination as a handmaid runs between mistress and servant, between reason and the senses, and whatever it derives extrinsically from the carnal senses, it pictures within in the service of reason. Imagination, then, always assists reason; not for one moment does it withdraw from her service. 'When sense is lacking, imagination does not fail in her service; when I am put in darkness, although I see nothing, I can still imagine.'¹¹

Although Richard, like Hugo, regards the imagination as a means of union of mind and body, it must be remembered that for the highest sort of mystical contemplation sensible experience is unnecessary, and hence that symbolic representations of the imagination have no place. Imagination comes into play only when the mind fails to realize its highest and purest capacity.¹² In the view of these mystics, it is a power always capable of error,—always, according to Richard, liable to be an unruly handmaid:

But Bilhah [imagination] is garrulous and loquacious. Nor can Rachel rule even in her own house; with such persistence does Bilhah din in the ears of the heart that Rachel cannot live with her. So it is that often when we sing and pray, we ought to remove from the eyes of the heart the phantasies of thought, or what might be called the images of things. The heart, though unwilling, is perpetually calling up images of the memory.¹³

But this capacity, however dangerous, is, nevertheless, necessary to rational life, for the carnal mind knows nothing save through corporeal objects; it thinks only in terms of the visible. Seeking

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71. This analysis is also reproduced in *De Septem Itineribus Aeternitatis: de Tertio Itinere*, 4. 2, long attributed to Bonaventura. See *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, ed. by A. C. Peltier, 15 vols., Paris, 1864-71, 8. 426-7.

¹¹ *Patrol. Lat.*, 196. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5. Cf. Aquinas, *S. T.*, 2. 2. 8. 7.

the invisible, the mind has recourse to the visible by means of imagination, because it cannot see on account of the purity of intelligence.

There follows one of the most interesting reproductions in the whole Platonic tradition of Plato's conception of the use of phantasy in the service of reason, in Richard described as 'contemplation in reason according to imagination':

This, I think, is the reason why Rachel has children first by her handmaid, Bilhah. For sweet it is in imagination at least to retain a memory of that which intelligence cannot yet apprehend by the force of reason. . . . Therefore reason persuades herself the more easily to think of true good and to raise the mind to desire for these by a certain imaginary beauty, rather than to fix thought upon false and deceptive goods. And this is the reason why Rachel wishes her handmaid to go to her husband. There is no one who does not know that this is the first way to the contemplation of the invisible.¹⁴

Richard significantly adds that this accounts for the allegory of Scripture; things invisible are described through the forms of the visible. He illustrates by reference to the Apocalypse. Here Richard, like Hugo, comes close to the problem of aesthetic; and it is to be noted that there is not a negative approach to, but an open avowal of, the theory of symbolism. It remained for another great mystic, who was also a great poet, to make the application within the realm of poetic theory.

Richard knew Aristotle and the Neoplatonists too well to lose sight of the distinction between a higher and a lower imagination. Sometimes it is merely bestial, the capacity of instinct in animals: 'because of that which we have seen or done, with no thought of any practical application of our images, and without deliberation, we run hither and thither with vague mind, as beasts do, through a similar power of imagination.' The rational imagination, on the other hand, the power already described as a means to contemplation, allows one out of sensible experience to feign something new. For example, we have seen both gold and a house, and, although we have never seen a golden house, we can, nevertheless, out of these materials imagine one, if we desire.¹⁵

It is this higher power which helps us to regulate our moral lives;

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

We often make use of imagination of this type when we examine diligently what are the future goods or evils of life. . . . Many times, from many goods and evils which corporeal sense has experienced in this life . . . it brings together that highest good or evil of a future life; and from the imagination of these certain images of the future are feigned, so that the rational imagination is easily convinced.¹⁶

Richard is asserting that it is through imagination that we are able to conceive of heaven and hell. Although our study of his views began with the notion that imagination plays quite unideal rôles in the process of contemplation, here we seem to have an idealization of the function in the moral and religious life. Instead of stressing the necessity of having the imagination, because of its unruliness, constantly under the supervision of the reason, he thinks of it at this point as a powerful instrument in the service of both reason and intelligence: of the former, by enabling the mind through its knowledge of the form of one object to imagine another; and of the second, by enabling the mind to rise through the sight of the visible to the contemplation of the invisible.¹⁷

His allegory here supplements his explicit theory. Bilhah (imagination) has two sons, Dan and Naphtalim. To Dan pertains the consideration of future evils, to Naphtalim of future goods. The former, then, represents the capacity for imagining evil, his brother for imagining good. Then Richard adds a distinction of great importance:

Dan knows nothing save through the corporeal; but Naphtalim rises through visible forms to the intelligence of the invisible. Dan can bring before the eyes of our hearts infernal torments . . . through imagination; but he does not dwell on the signification of these torments by means of spiritual intelligence. But when one reads of the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem made of precious stones, what sensible man is able to accept the bare literal meaning? A mystical meaning is sought.¹⁸

This pertains to Naphtalim, whom we might term the first allegorical embodiment in literature of the symbolic imagination. Imagination, Richard believes, conceives of future punishment on the analogy of present sensible experience; but when it would imagine Paradise, the more simple kind of imagination, dependent upon physical

¹⁶ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13. This is in part a summary.

experiences, is insufficient, and its highest capacities in the service of our contemplative power are then disclosed.¹⁹

These two great mystics of the Victorine school are close to Plato. The typical idealist, we have observed, with his eye upon the etymology of 'phantasy' and 'imagination,' condemned the power or powers denoted to comparatively unideal rôles, or denied their existence altogether; but Plato, with a genius which kept him free from slavery to etymology, anticipated for the imagination a higher function that either consistent materialist or consistent idealist has as yet given to it. Richard at least approaches the theory implicit in Plato, and is to be numbered with Plotinus, Philostratus, Synesius, and Augustine as paving the way for, though never actually achieving, the constructive theory of which idealism is capable.

Usually, however, the psychology of the Christian mystics presents an enumeration of mental powers, from the lowest, *sensus*, to the highest, *intelligentia*, in which imagination plays a comparatively unimportant part. In John of Salisbury (c. 1115-1180), who has already been glanced at,²⁰ imagination is a capacity for calling up images of experience.²¹ Except for the omission of 'opinion,' the list given by Isaac of Stella (d. 1169) is like that of John: *sensus*, *imaginatio*, [*aestimatio*], *ratio*, *intellectus*, *intelligentia*.²² These are described as analogous in our microcosmos to earth, water, air, ether, and empyrean respectively.²³ There is in the one series an ascent to Heaven, in the other an ascent to Wisdom. Again, as in the thought of the Victors, the chief importance of imagination lies in the fact that it is the means of union of soul and body; but, unlike Hugo and Richard, he is content with a description and

¹⁹ The student of Dante may see in this a possible source of his theory of vision, especially as one considers the physical qualities of the visions of the first canticle in comparison with the spiritual qualities of those of the last. The *Inferno* springs from Dan, the *Paradiso* from Naphtalim.

²⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 184.

²¹ *De Septem Septenis*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 199. 951.

²² *Epistola de Anima*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 194. 1879.

²³ This analogy is carried further in a later passage: 'Habens itaque in se anima vires, quibus investiget omnia, et per eas existens omnibus similis, cum sit una, terrae videlicet per sensum, aquae per imaginationem, aeri per rationem, firmamento per intellectum, coelo coelorum per intelligentiam, vel metallis atque lapidibus per essentiam, herbis et arboribus per vitam, animabus per sensum et imaginationem, hominibus per rationem, angelis per intellectum, Deo per intelligentiam.' (*op. cit.*, 1886). Here imagination is remote from contemplation of God. Cf. Hugo, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 177. 287.

evaluation of its simplest functions: *Sensu itaque, ut dictum est, anima corpus percipit, imaginatione fere corpus, ratione fere incorporeum, intellectu vere incorporeum, intelligentia pura incorporeum.*²⁴ Again, he writes: 'Through sense we know bodies; through imagination the likenesses of bodies; through reason their dimensions and their elements of similarity even in their apparent diversity; through intellect commutable spirit; and through intelligence incommutable God.'²⁵ For Isaac the imagination, with a quality analogical to water, must always be closer to earth than to ether. Its highest function is to be seen in the scientist's observation of natural objects, just as reason is seen in the activity of the mathematician, and intelligence in the thought of the theologian.

Bonaventura (1221-1274) also has this scheme of an ascending series of mental powers in lieu of the simple trilogy of the descriptive psychologists. He enumerates *sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia, apex mentis.*²⁶ Like other mystics, however, he is familiar with this empirical psychology. Through the power of sensation, he writes, mind grasps impressions; through memory it retains them; and through phantasy it compounds and divides them.²⁷ Phantasy, he says, following the tradition which culminates in Albert, is the primary *virtus collativa*. Elsewhere he writes: 'Sensation perceives the external, and, after it, common sense; then imagination and reason reflect and store in the memory.'²⁸ One finds throughout Bonaventura this faculty psychology with its trilogy imperfectly combined with the mystic's ascending scale of mental powers.

One also observes the influence of Augustine. Bonaventura frequently speaks of a trinity of faculties, sensory, imaginative, and intellectual. Vision, he writes, is of three sorts, corporeal, imaginative, and intellectual. Everything seen by the mind is seen in its corporeal essence or *species*, by means of something else, or by itself simply. If seen in the first way, it is seen through the senses; if in the third, by intellect; and if in both ways, then by imagination.²⁹

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 194. 1885.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1886.

²⁶ *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, ed. by PP. Collegii AS. Bonaventura, 10 vols., Florence, 1882-1892, 5. 297.

²⁷ *Breviloquium*, Pars II, c. ix, in *op. cit.*, 5. 227.

²⁸ *In Hex.*, 22, in *op. cit.*, 5. 442.

²⁹ *Sent.*, 3. 23, in *op. cit.*, 3. 504. Cf. *supra*, p. 167.

The same notion runs through a passage on prophetic revelation: speculation begins in sensation, goes over to imagination, and thence to reason. This ascent, he adds, is called Jacob's ladder.³⁰

It is plain that it is the mystical psychology which is in the ascendant in Bonaventura's thought. It is a mystic's distrust of a faculty dependent upon the senses which causes him to characterize as *pessima haeretica* the mediaeval Aristotelian tradition of an *intellectus recipiens, efficiens, factum*. In this division of the mind into three parts it is the use of *intellectus* to which he seems to object: intellect is the perfection of man, and he has nothing but contempt for a view which includes as part of this faculty the *intellectum passivum (recipiens)*, which is nothing but imagination.³¹ This phantastic and imaginative power (the terms for him are synonymous) depends much more on the body than do the rational and intellectual powers. If the power of phantasy is not impeded by an unsuitable physical condition, as in phrenetics and in sleep,³² it will flourish; but it must not be allowed to flourish at the expense of intellect. Imagination, Bonaventura has learned from Augustine, is likely to disturb the freedom of the will.³³ Through the vigorous direction of 'intentions,' he writes, the phantasm is taken for truth, as Augustine illustrates in *De Trinitate*.³⁴ Phantasy is responsible for error by obscuring reason, making one see what does not exist.³⁵ The phantastic power has a twofold function in the act of knowing. One of these is the offering of *phantasmata* to the *intellectus possibile*, just as the physical object offers a *speciem*, a sensory image, to the eye. Thus intellect is excited by a lower, corporeal power. In consequence, when there is disease and ineptitude of body, the free play of will and intellect is hindered.³⁶

This fear of phantasy causes him to espouse a curious perversion of the Platonic and Neoplatonic view of Divine influence upon the imagination, viz., the notion that demons similarly influence the

³⁰ *Brev.*, Pars v, c. vii, in *op. cit.*, 5. 260. For 'Jacob's ladder' *vide supra*, p. 200.

³¹ *Sent.*, 2. 18. 2. 1, in *op. cit.*, 2. 446. Cf. *supra*, p. 139.

³² *Ibid.*, 2. 25. 1. 6, in *ibid.*, 2. 621. He objects to the notion that the phantastic faculty is not impeded in sleep. Although phantasy seems more vigorous in sleep, it is, nevertheless, more powerful in the waking state in enabling man to imagine what he wishes. This greater power in reverie we are likely to overlook because of the mind's concern with external stimuli. See also *ibid.*, 2. 624.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2. 25. 1. 6, in *op. cit.*, 2. 621.

³⁴ *Sent.*, 2. 8. 1. 3, in *op. cit.*, 2. 229.

³⁵ *De Decem Praeceptiis*, 2. 24, in *op. cit.*, 5. 514.

³⁶ *Sent.*, 2. 25. 1. 6, in *op. cit.*, 2. 622.

imagination. He quotes Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, 4. 23: *In daemonibus est furor irrationalis, amens concupiscentia, phantasia proterva*. Phantasy is an important source of error.³⁷ Defending this view of a *phantasia proterva* in demons, he says that *phantasia* may be taken in two ways: for the *vis sensitiva*, a receptacle of sensations, and as synonymous with *apparitio*, cognate with *phanos*. The first meaning ties phantasy to the corporeal; but the second, allowing it to be conceived as spiritual and incorporeal, has a place for the power of the demon to implant these *phantasias protervas*, so-called because demons, although they are intelligent and know the truth, do not wish to teach others, but to seduce them.³⁸

This distrust of imagination, an inheritance from Neoplatonic and Stoic traditions alike, so thoroughly permeates the thought of the Middle Ages, and especially the thought of the mystics, that we may well, at this point, bring together a number of its most significant expressions. We have already considered an important passage from the spurious Clementine writings.³⁹ There is also a significant passage in Jerome (d. 420) in his *Commentary on Habakuk*, 3. 10, which he translates at this point: *Dedit abyssus vocem suam, altitudinem phantasiae suae*.⁴⁰ Here he is evidently following the rendering of the Septuagint (c. 300-132 B.C.):

ἔδωκεν ἡ ἄβυσσος φωνὴν αὐτῆς,
ὕψος φαντασίας αὐτῆς.⁴¹

In the Vulgate, translated directly from the Hebrew, he reads:

Dedit abyssus vocem suam:
Altitudo manus suas levavit.

This diversity makes his commentary upon the translation from the Greek text the more important:

Notice that he does not say, *altitudinem suam*, but *altitudinem phantasiae suae*, i.e. shade and image. They seem, indeed, to have loftiness and knowledge of the Scriptures, but all their loftiness, in comparison with truth, is phantasy. . . We seek in Scripture wherever possible to come upon

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2. 7. 1. 1, in *op. cit.*, 2. 189.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. 190.

³⁹ *Vide supra*, pp. 100-103.

⁴⁰ S. Eusebius Hieronymus, *Com. in Abaccuc*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 25. 1323.

⁴¹ *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, ed. by H. B. Swete, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1909-1912, 3. 62.

'phantasy' in a good sense; but since it is rarely or never to be found in this sense, we shall interpret *abyssum et phantasiam ejus* in a bad sense.⁴²

Testimony concerning this evil connotation of 'phantasy' and 'imagination,' especially in religious literature, is yet more explicit in Cassiodorus (d. 562) *Expositio in Psalterium*:

When he says, *Sedet in insidiis*, the act of Antichrist is compared to the habit of robbers who lie in wait in the hidden paths that they may slay the innocent. This figure is called *phantasia*, because in conceiving visions of the future the mind of the hearer is led astray.⁴³

The evidence here of two great expositors, one the greatest of mediaeval translators, explains, perhaps better than the explicit psychologies which we have examined, this prevalent distrust of 'phantasy.'

Theophanes (8th. cen.) in *Chronographia* uses the phrase, *μετὰ μεγάλης φαντασίας*, in a depreciatory sense, evidently meaning, 'with great show,' or 'pomp.'⁴⁴ Benedict (480-554) in the one passage involving the term writes: 'Whence come these shameful and base nocturnal phantasies? They come, for the most part, from unworthy, inconsistent motions and actions of the mind during the day.'⁴⁵ Gilbert of Holland (d. 1172) echoes the same distrust: 'The intellect is obscured by imagination as by a veil, so that it does not contemplate pure truth. . . . Care beclouds all joy, imagination obscures it, honor tempts it. In the first are shadows, in the second allurements, in the third labor.'⁴⁶ It is again the theme of 'vain imaginations,' to be echoed, not only throughout the Middle Ages, but in the Renaissance as well. It is a tradition which the student of 'imagination' can never afford to lose sight of.

After our study of the effect upon theories of imagination of two great streams of thought, the one primarily Aristotelian, the other

⁴² *Op. cit.*, 25. 1323.

⁴³ M. Aurelius Cassiodorus, *Expositio in Psalt.*, Psalm 1x, 28, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 70. 88. See also *De Anima*, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 70. 1287: 'Parum est quod sopitis sensibus volatica imaginatione deludimur, dum frequenter etiam vigilantes a nostra contemplatione traducimur'; and *ibid.*, 1294: 'Tendimus quidem vigorem animi in diversas partes multasque regiones, et phantastica imaginatione ad capitis nostri iudicium perducitur, quod per diversas mundi partes cognoscitur exquisitum. The form *phantastica imaginatione* is also found at p. 1285.

⁴⁴ In *Patrol. Graeca*, 108. 293; cf. *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας* p. 148. I have found no other references to 'phantasy' as the name of a figure of speech.

⁴⁵ S. Benedictus, *Concordia Reg.*, 31. 22, in *Patrol. Lat.*, 103. 997.

⁴⁶ Gillebertus Abbas, *In Cantica Sermo*, XLV, in *op. cit.*, 184. 241.

Platonic, we are in a better position to examine the views of two great thinkers, Moses ben Maimon (1135-1204) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274?), who, although leaning toward the tradition of the descriptive psychologists, represent better than any thinkers between Augustine and Dante the results for 'imagination' of contact with both kinds of thought. It is the more significant that syntheses of views of imagination are to be found in these two, since they have often been considered the acutest thinkers in their time of their respective races and religions. Moses ben Maimon, or, as he is usually called, Maimonides, is frequently referred to as 'the second Moses'; and a popular saying runs, 'From Moses to Moses [Mendelssohn] there was none like Moses.'⁴⁷ Thomas Aquinas, with whom we shall compare him, is, of course, after Augustine, the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages. It is at least interesting, but not necessarily significant, that the theories of imagination of both men are involved in an attempted reconciliation of Aristotelianism with religious dogma, and that both have to do with semi-mystical theories of vision. Of greater importance is the assertion that Maimonides was the model of Aquinas in his harmonization of Aristotle with Christian doctrine.⁴⁸

Maimonides, first of all, throws light upon both Hebrew and Moslem terminology. The word *temunah*, he writes,⁴⁹ has three different significations: outlines of objects perceived by the senses; the forms of our imaginations, i. e. the impressions retained in imagination when the objects have ceased to affect the senses; and, third, the true form of an object, perceived only by the intellect. It is in this last sense alone that the term is applied to God. This contrast between intellect and imagination is, for Maimonides, basic: Adam in his innocence possessed intellect, a power of discrimination between right and wrong, true and false; but after his disobedience he gave way to desires having their source in imagination, thus transgressing a command of reason.⁵⁰ The fruit of the temptation, in this view, is the substitution of imagination

⁴⁷ See Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, tr. from the original Arabic text by M. Friedländer, 2nd. ed., London, 1910, p. xxv. For Maimonides' position in Jewish thought see I. Husik, *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy*, New York, 1906. For his influence upon subsequent thought see especially pp. 305-308.

⁴⁸ See Husik, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

⁴⁹ Maimonides, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

for intellect. It is the latter power which is man's true prerogative, in virtue of which he is a man. Most animals have imagination, viz., the higher classes having hearts; but man's distinction is not in possessing imagination, for the action of imagination, far from being identical with that of intellect, is the reverse of it. The intellect analyzes, divides, forms abstract ideas, generalizes, and distinguishes the properties of the genus.

Imagination has none of these functions. It only perceives the individual, the compound in that aggregate condition in which it presents itself to the senses; or it combines things which exist separately, joins some of them together, and represents them all as one body or as a force of the body. Hence it is that some imagine a man with a horse's head, with wings, etc. This is called a fiction, a phantasm; it is a thing to which nothing in the actual world corresponds. Nor can imagination in any way obtain a purely immaterial image of an object, however abstract the form of the image may be. Imagination yields therefore no test for the reality of a thing.⁵¹

It is on this account that 'imagination' (*ra'ayon*) was never employed in a figurative sense in speaking of God, but the words for 'thought' and 'reason' frequently were, since man ascribes to God only what he considers perfection, not a defect.⁵²

This contrast is also fundamental for his metaphysics: his opposition to the prevalent Mohammedan view of the relation of appearance to reality. Here he throws valuable light upon Mohammedan usage: these thinkers, he says, are often guided by imagination rather than intellect.⁵³ They observe that everything conceived by imagination is admitted by the intellect as possible, e. g. that the terrestrial globe should become an all-encompassing sphere, or that a man might have the height of a mountain, might have several heads, and the like.⁵⁴ 'The philosophers,' says Maimonides, 'object to this method and say, "You call a thing impossible because it cannot be imagined; or possible because it can be imagined; and thus you consider as possible that which is found possible by imagination, not by the intellect." ' 'They describe as possible that which can be imagined, whether the reality correspond to it or not,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130. This suggests indebtedness to Avicenna (*vide supra*, p. 182); but Husik (*op. cit.*, p. 281) says that in the details of his psychology Maimonides follows Alfarabi instead of Avicenna.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

and as impossible that which cannot be imagined.⁵⁶ But some things impossible from the point of view of imagination, Maimonides insists, are real, e. g. the earth as a globe upside down, or the non-convergence of apparently converging lines. It has consequently been proved that things which cannot be perceived or imagined, and which, if tested by imagination alone, would be found to be impossible, are, nevertheless, in real existence; and the non-existence of that which the imagination has represented as possible has also been proved, e. g. the corporeality of God and his existence as a force residing in the body.⁵⁶ 'Imagination perceives nothing except bodies or properties inherent in bodies.'

Maimonides is, however, anxious to be just to his opponents. After insisting that faith is a faculty 'entirely distinct from imagination,' and warning against the errors of men guided by imagination, he adds that Moslem philosophers do not altogether ignore this: 'They know it, and call that which can be imagined without having reality—as, e. g., the corporeality of God—a phantom and a fancy; they state frequently that such phantoms are not real.'⁵⁷ Some persons have such strong imaginations, however, that, when they assume that a thing is in existence, their imaginative assumptions correspond to reality.⁵⁸

Thus far Maimonides has been typical of the mediaeval Aristotelian tradition in psychology and metaphysics. We proceed now to a view of the rôle of imagination in prophecy and dreams which connects him with the tradition which grew out of the study of the *Timaeus*. Here again his basis is the distinction between intellect and imagination, and the subordination of the one to the other. Prophetic visions, according to sages, he writes, come from God; all of those images which the Prophets received are images created by God. Every image in our imagination has been created.⁵⁹ Prophecy is an emanation from the Divine Being through the medium of the active intellect, in the first instance to man's rational faculty,

⁵⁶ *Loc. cit.*; cf. the Stoic doctrine of *φαντασία καταληπτική*, *supra*, pp. 88-89.

⁵⁶ It is to the false work of imagination that Maimonides would attribute anthropomorphic conceptions of God. To such absurdities men are forced by the great license given to imagination and because every material thing is necessarily imagined as a certain substance possessing attributes. Guided by such imaginations, man thought that God had attributes. (*Ibid.*, p. 69.)

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

and then to his imaginative faculty. It is a state which cannot be acquired through the cultivation of our mental and moral capacities unless there be combined with these the highest excellence of the imagination. But this is an organ the perfection of which cannot be cultivated.⁶⁰

The highest functions of the imagination are to be observed when the senses are at rest; then divine inspiration is possible, both in dreams and prophecy. These differ only quantitatively: the imagination acts in sleep just as in prophecy, but its function is not fully developed. The real essence of prophecy he defines as a 'perfection acquired in a dream or in a vision.' 'The imaginative faculty,' he explains, 'acquires such an efficiency in its action that it sees the thing as if it came from without, and perceives it as if through the medium of bodily senses.'⁶¹ That which has our attention in waking experience becomes the subject of imagination in sleep. Hence imagination is influenced by intellect only in so far as it is predisposed. This indicates clearly that the brain and other organs must be in health, the intellect must be acute, and the lower desires must be in complete subjection. 'A man who satisfies these conditions, whilst his fully developed imagination is in action, influenced by the Active Intellect according to his mental training,—such a person will undoubtedly perceive nothing but things very extraordinary and divine, and see nothing but God and His angels.'⁶²

Prophetic power, then, is dependent upon the perfection of the mental and moral faculties as they determine the proper receptivity of the imagination. Since imagination is one of the corporeal faculties, there must also be proper physical and emotional states: prophets cannot prophesy when they mourn, or are angry, sad, or languid. Jacob, for instance, had no revelation when his imagination was occupied with the thought of Joseph's death. Moses, he adds, seemingly by way of digression, was not inspired through his imagination, but directly through his intellect.⁶³ Sometimes the Active Intellect reaches only the logical and not the imaginative faculty, at times because of the inability of the former, and at other times because of the defect of the imaginative faculty, as in philosophers.

If, however, the imaginative faculty is naturally in the most perfect

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁶² *Loc. cit.*

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

condition, this influence may, as has been explained by us and by other philosophers, reach both his logical and his imaginative faculties: this is the case with prophets. But it happens sometimes that the influence only reaches the imaginative faculty on account of the insufficiency of the logical faculty, arising either from a natural defect, or from a neglect in training. This is the case with statesmen, lawgivers, diviners, charmers, and men that have true dreams, or do wonderful things by strange means and secret arts, though they are not wise men; all these belong to the third class. It is further necessary to understand that some persons belonging to the third class perceive scenes, dreams, and confused images, when awake, in the form of a prophetic vision. They then believe that they are prophets; they wonder that they perceive visions, and think that they have acquired wisdom without training. They fall into grave errors as regards important philosophical principles, and see a strange mixture of true and imaginary things. All this is the consequence of the strength of their imaginative faculty, and the weakness of their logical faculty, which has not developed, and has not passed from potentiality to actuality.⁶⁴

These false prophets, he repeats, have imperfectly developed logical faculties; they are endowed only with imaginative and inventive powers. Their prophecies may be based only upon sensory impressions, and these they regard as having immediate objective reality.⁶⁵

True prophets, on the other hand, are able to conceive ideas which result from premises which human reason by itself could not comprehend. 'Thus they tell things which men could not tell by reason and ordinary imagination alone,' for the same agent which causes the perfection of the imaginative faculty enables prophets to foretell future events with such clearness that one would suspect that the vision came to the imagination through the normal channels of sensation.⁶⁶ In like manner, when the senses are dormant in dreams, the Active Intellect influences the rational faculties, and through them the imagination.⁶⁷

It is through this relation of dreams to prophecy that Maimonides explains the belief of the prophets that God speaks directly to them. In reality, the power of the imagination does not proceed thus far; what actually happens is that a dream is likely to precede the prophetic vision, and the prophet, confusing this dream-image

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁶⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 235.

with reality, insists that God spoke to him.⁶⁸ Moses, he reiterates, heard the voice of God without the medium of imagination.

When he faces the problem of the adequate expression of these visions, Maimonides comes closer than any of his predecessors to an explicit statement of an aesthetic theory implicit in Plato: after taking into account the allegorical significance of candle-sticks, horses, mountains, scrolls, walls, and animals in prophetic writings, he continues:

The prophets, however, are also shown things which do not illustrate the object of the vision, but indicate it by their name through its etymology or homonymity. Thus the imaginative faculty forms the image of a thing, the name of which has two meanings, one of which denotes something different.⁶⁹

Here, in a Jewish philosopher of the twelfth century, acquainted alike with the Aristotelian views transmitted by the Arabians, and the mystical views of the Neoplatonists, is a definite statement in terms of 'imagination' of the theory of symbolism.

In the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274?) we have the greatest encyclopaedia of the thought of the Middle Ages, theological, ethical, and metaphysical; and in it one anticipates a theory of imagination which borrows from Christian and pagan, mystic and descriptive psychologist alike. One is not disappointed: he is seemingly familiar with Nemesius, whose views he attributes to Gregory of Nyssa (335-395),⁷⁰ Augustine, Isidore, and John of Damascus, Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventura, and, most important, of course, Albertus Magnus, bringing him in contact with the great Arabian commentators.

Although he is well acquainted with the mystics, his bent is toward the careful descriptive psychology of Albert. In fact, one of the most noteworthy passages of the *Summa* is a defense of Albert's account, an answer to certain definite objections. These criticisms had the effect of breaking up the nicely articulated structures of Albert and his Arabian sources: it was denied that common sense was an internal sensitive power, imagination and memory were regarded as but aspects of sense, and the practical need of a faculty of opinion or judgment was brought into doubt.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁷⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 180.

It was pointed out, on the other hand, that the person who was unwilling to regard judgment and imagination as kinds of memory, must, to be consistent, define a power of cogitation as something distinct from judgment, that there may be, in the scheme of knowledge, a faculty for comparing, adding, and dividing, and a power of reminiscence distinct from memory. There was also criticism of Augustine's division of vision into corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual, on the ground that this implied only three internal powers, sense, imagination, and intellect.⁷¹

In his answer Thomas gives the already familiar enumeration of the powers of the soul, the scheme of Avicenna: common sense, phantasy, imagination, opinion, and memory.⁷² He proceeds to show that this analysis, substantially adopted by Albert, is better than that which would assume that different functions of the mind are merely different aspects of the same mental power: 'If any of these actions cannot be reduced to the same one principle, they must be assigned to diverse powers; since a power of the soul is nothing else than the proximate principle of the soul's operation.'⁷³ This is perhaps the clearest statement found of the point of view of the faculty psychology. With this as a guiding principle, he proceeds to demonstrate that the process of apprehension presupposes a common meeting place for separate sensations; that we may have in our minds the forms of sensible things; that we have a capacity for retaining and preserving these forms; and, finally, that the faculty of opinion corresponds to a definite need of our animal organism.

Thus, therefore, for the reception of sensible forms, the *proper sense* and the *common sense* are appointed. . . . But for the retention and preservation of these forms, the *phantasy* or *imagination* is appointed; which are the same, for phantasy or imagination is as it were a storehouse of forms received through the senses. Furthermore, for the apprehension of intentions which are not received through the senses, the *estimative* power is appointed: and for the preservation thereof, the *memorative* power, which is a storehouse of such-like intentions.⁷⁴

⁷¹ *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, 13 vols., Rome, 1892-1908; S. T. I. 78. 4; in *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2nd. ed., 21 vols., London, 1920-5, 4. 87.

⁷² *Vide supra*, pp. 182-183.

⁷³ S. T., I. 78. 4, in tr. *op. cit.*, 4. 87.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, in *op. cit.*, 4. 88-89.

Such an account answers the objection which would have done away with common sense and judgment, and confused imagination and memory. Thus far he has been following his master.⁷⁶

In his method of answering these objections, however, he has not been aware of the extent to which he has modified the system which Albert derived from Avicenna.

Avicenna, however, assigns between the estimative and the imaginative, a fifth power, which combines and divides imaginary forms:⁷⁶ as when from the imaginary form of gold and the imaginary form of a mountain, we compose the one form of a golden mountain, which we have never seen. But this operation is not to be found in animals other than man, in whom the imaginative power suffices thereto. To man also does Averroes attribute this action in his book *De sensu et sensibilibus* (viii). So there is no need to assign more than four interior powers of the sensitive part—namely, the common sense, the imagination, and the estimative and memorative powers.⁷⁷

In this way Thomas sets the example for those who would rid themselves of the troublesome distinction between phantasy and imagination.

This descriptive psychology of the Middle Ages, nowhere better exemplified than here in the *Summa*, is the development of a tendency first apparent in *De Anima*. In smaller minds this impulse to analysis leads to false refinement and to a divorce of psychology from those larger problems to which, in the systems of the greatest constructive thinkers, it was properly subordinated. But Averroes and Avicenna, Honorius and John of Salisbury, Albert, and Bacon, and Aquinas,—the great and the small,—although their systems differ in detail, and they themselves have varying degrees of insight, contribute to a common effect upon the theory of imagination. First, there is common insistence upon this principle, best enunciated by Aquinas, that diversity of mental functions implies a diversity of faculties. The greater psychologists might easily keep in mind the essential unity of thought while enumerating these separate powers; but minds less comprehensive, interested in mere classification and enumeration, indulge in habits of definition inimicable to great theories of imagination,—habits which result, for instance,

⁷⁶ *Vide supra*, pp. 187 ff.

⁷⁶ 'Imaginary' has an unfortunate connotation; the sense is, 'forms preserved in the imagination.'

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, in *op. cit.*, 4. 89.

in the views which Aquinas was anxious to combat. This power of analysis, justly to be praised in an Augustine, or a Maimonides, or an Aquinas, has its obvious limitations: only when guided by a purpose higher than that of mere description, and supplemented by a capacity for synthesis, does it result in constructive views. It is here that Aquinas rises above his fellows: he not only sums up the acute analyses of eight centuries or more, but he notes the implications of his system for the more important problems of philosophy and theology.

When we face with him some of these problems, we again confront the chief interests of the mystics; but, in following his argument, we must ever keep in mind that as the greatest Aristotelian of the Middle Ages he constantly leans toward the other tradition; there is always something of the empiricist about him. When with the mystics he would know under what conditions one possesses the highest insight, he does not, like them, talk of varying degrees of vision. Rather, he puts the question quite as Aristotle would: 'Whether the Intellect can actually understand through the intelligible species of which it is possessed, without turning to phantasms?'⁷⁸ In his search for ultimate truths Aquinas found himself facing, among other conceptions, the old idea that there could be no phantasm of an incorporeal reality, since imagination does not transcend the limitations of time and space. Over against this he puts the famous dictum of *De Anima* that 'the soul understands nothing without a phantasm.' In the spirit of Aristotle and Augustine (the two are throughout his main authorities) he appeals to common experience. When anything happens to the brain in such a way as to induce phrensy or lethargy, i.e. abnormal states of imagination and memory respectively, we know very well that we are hindered from 'knowing.' Again, we are familiar with the fact that, when we try to understand anything, we form certain phantasms to serve as examples. 'Now the reason of this is that the power of knowledge is proportioned to the thing known. Wherefore the proper object of the angelic intellect, which is entirely separate from a body, is an intelligible substance separate from a body. Whereas the proper object of the human intellect, which is united to a body, is a quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter; and through such natures of visible things it rises to a certain knowledge

⁷⁸ S. T., I. 84. 7, in *ibid.*, 4. 177.

of things invisible.'⁷⁹ He thus insists firmly upon the empirical bases of human knowledge. Like other great thinkers, he sees the essential problem involved: 'But if the proper object of our intellect were a separate form; or if, as the Platonists say, the natures of sensible things subsisted apart from the individual; there would be no need for the intellect to turn to the phantasms whenever it understands.'⁸⁰ Aquinas sees the issue clearly: consistent mystics have no place for phantasms as ordinarily conceived. Never in complete agreement with them, he is here asserting his partial adherence to the empirical view by insisting upon the reality of the phantasm. In so doing he fails, nevertheless, to evolve a theory of imaginative vision.

At times, however, he approaches a more exalted view:

Incorporeal things, of which there are no phantasms, are known to us by comparison with sensible bodies of which there are phantasms. Thus we understand truth by considering a thing of which we possess the truth. . . . Other incorporeal substances [other than God] we know . . . by some comparison to corporeal things. And, therefore, when we understand something about these things, we need to turn to phantasms of bodies, although there are no phantasms of the things themselves.⁸¹

In the next article (1. 85. 1) he is concerned with the proposition: 'Whether our intellect understands corporeal and material things by abstraction from phantasms?' It had been objected that 'the forms of material things do not exist as abstracted from the particular things represented by the phantasms,' that 'material things cannot be understood by abstraction of the universal from the particular,' that Aristotle had said that 'the phantasm is to the intellectual soul what colour is to sight,' and hence it follows from this analogy that the act of understanding does not take place 'by abstraction of something from the phantasm, but by the phantasm impressing itself on the intellect,' and, finally, that it is the function neither of the active nor of the passive intellect, the two parts of the dianoetic soul, to abstract the intelligible species from phantasms. In opposition to these opinions, Aquinas insists that the active intellect,

⁷⁹ *S. T.*, 1. 84. 7, in *ibid.*, 4. 178.

⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 4. 179. He also writes: 'The sense of God is not seen in a vision of the imagination [*in visioni imaginaria*]; but the imagination receives some form representing God according to some mode of similitude; as in Divine Scripture Divine Things are metaphorically described by means of sensible things.' This is close to a theory of symbolism. Cf. Maimonides, *supra*, pp. 214-216.

standing in relation to the phantasm as color to light, throws light upon the phantasm, by its power disregarding the conditions of individuality and abstracting the intelligible species from it.⁸²

Equally important in its effect upon subsequent speculation is his attitude toward a problem complementary to the foregoing,—a problem in which Maimonides was also interested: ‘To what extent can supernatural beings alter man’s processes of thought, and in consequence his conduct?’ or, specifically, to what extent is an angel able to change the imagination of man.⁸³ We may recall that Plato had touched upon the problem, and that Plutarch, Nebridius, and Synesius had been interested in it. Now it is to be comprehended within the encyclopaedia of the *Summa*. Angels, both good and bad, we are told, can change the imagination of a person. Such intercourse between man and angel implies, indeed, no unnatural mingling of essences; the angel proceeds to alter the physiological condition of his patient, especially in bringing about the desired local movement of the humors. This, in turn, directly causes the proper vision to be induced in the imagination. ‘An angel changes the imagination, not indeed by the impression of an imaginative form in no way previously received by the senses (for he cannot make a man born blind imagine colour), but by local movement of the spirits and humours, as above explained.’⁸⁴ Nor does this capacity for influencing the imagination imply any deception on the part of the angel, for, along with the process of informing the imagination, there may also be an enlightening of the intellect properly to interpret the vision.⁸⁵

An angel causing an imaginative vision [*aliquam imaginariam visionem*], sometimes enlightens the intellect at the same time, so that it knows what these images signify; and then there is no deception. But sometimes by the angelic operation the similitudes of things only appear in the imagination; but neither then is deception caused by the angel, but by the defect in the intellect of him to whom such things appear. Thus neither was Christ a cause of deception when He spoke many things to the people in parables, which He did not explain to them.⁸⁶

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4. 187.

⁸³ *S. T.*, 1. 111. 3, in *ibid.*, 5. 110.

⁸⁴ *S. T.*, *loc. cit.*, in *op. cit.*, 5. 111. Cf. *S. T.*, 2. 80. 2, for the influence of the devil upon the imagination and sensitive appetite.

⁸⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 214-215.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

This power over the imagination is also possessed by bad angels:

A demon can work on man's imagination and even on his corporeal senses, so that something seems otherwise than it is, as explained above (Q. CXI., AA. 3, 4). . . . In the same way he can clothe any corporeal thing with any corporeal form, so as to appear therein. This is what Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* XVIII., *loc. cit.*): *Man's imagination, which, whether thinking or dreaming, takes the forms of an innumerable number of things, appears to other men's senses, as it were embodied in the semblance of some animal.* This is not to be understood as though the imagination itself or the images formed therein were identified with that which appears embodied to the senses of another man: but that the demon, who forms an image in a man's imagination, can offer the same picture to another man's senses.⁸⁷

This represents, better than any other passage in mediaeval literature, the evolution of the Platonic view that the supernatural may implant phantasms in the phantasy of man. The espousal of this view by Aquinas probably had no little to do with its prevalence in the later literature of the demonologists.

This influence of angels upon the human imagination also involved a knowledge of the future. The soul knows the future, he says, by the impression of superior spiritual and corporeal causes; of spiritual causes, when by Divine power the human intellect is enlightened through the ministry of angels, and the phantasms are directed to the knowledge of future events; or, by the influence of demons, when the imagination is moved regarding the future known to the demons. . . . The soul is naturally more inclined to receive these impressions of spiritual causes when it is withdrawn from the senses, as it is then nearer to the spiritual world, and freer from external distractions. . . . in consequence of the sensitive faculties being acts of corporeal organs, the influence of the heavenly bodies causes the imagination to be affected, and so, as the heavenly bodies cause many future events, the imagination receives certain images of some such events.⁸⁸

This is the great summary in mediaeval thought of the theory of the regulation of conduct through the control of the imagination by supernatural forces. It is a view which ultimately derives from the *Timaeus* through the Neoplatonists. Aquinas is also interested in the more natural processes by which conduct is influenced by imagination: in the ethical portion of the *Summa* he writes:

⁸⁷ *S. T.*, I. 114. 4, in *ibid.*, 5. 147-8.

⁸⁸ *S. T.*, I. 86. 4, in *ibid.*, 4. 214-5.

In like manner on the part of the intellectual habits, by which a man is prompt rightly to judge of the presentations of imagination—when he ceases from the use of the intellectual habit, extraneous imaginations arise, and occasionally some even of a contrary tendency, so that unless by the use of the intellectual habit these are cut down or repressed, the man is rendered less fit to form a right judgment.⁸⁹

This play of human imagination in the ethical realm is interestingly compared with that of demons: a *perverted phantasy* is attributed to demons, since they have a false practical estimate of what is the true good; while deception in us comes properly from the phantasy, whereby we sometimes hold fast to images of things as to things themselves, as is manifest in sleepers and lunatics.⁹⁰ In Aquinas one hears the note dominant in all discussions of the imagination in ethics, whether of mystic or empiricist, Neoplatonist, Stoic, or Aristotelian: the intellect must rule over the imagination. It is a conviction which was to pervade the theory of imagination until comparatively recent times, and, in part, to determine conceptions of its importance in art as well as in conduct.

This is apparent when one reflects upon the common association of poetry and dreams. For Aquinas, a free play of the imagination in dreams is to be feared, since it results in the creation of distorted phantasms, with no check on the part of a faculty of judgment. It is not alone through the agency of demons that the phantasy may play one false: its ordinary activities which cause it to be associated with sensation and passion involve the possibility of deception and error, and when, as in dreams, the power of judgment is dormant, then its operations are the more to be distrusted.⁹¹ Although Aquinas closely approached at one point a doctrine of imaginative symbolism, which might have involved an appreciation of the rôle of imagination in poetry as in dreams, yet in his utterances one may study a typical mediaeval attitude involving a distrust of imagination because it was constantly to be judged by unaesthetic standards. A modern age glorifies poetry because it is of such stuff as dreams are made of; but Aquinas and his fellow thinkers depreciated it for precisely the same reasons. Whether we think of

⁸⁹ *S. T.*, 2. 53. 3. See also *S. T.*, 2. 77. 1., where imagination and opinion are described as ruled by passion.

⁹⁰ *Vide supra*, p. 209: *phantasia proterva*.

⁹¹ See, however, *S. T.*, 1. 84. 8, in *ibid.*, 4. 181, wherein A. recognizes a certain orderly sequence of phantasms in dreams under certain physical conditions, and the ability of judgment partially to compare these phantasms with reality.

Aquinas as an Aristotelian, describing our mental furniture and finding for imagination its proper place in a scheme of comprehension, or as a kind of Platonist, with the mystics glorifying pure Intelligence, or, again, as one who had inherited the Stoic interest in a criterion of knowledge and the *summum bonum* in the moral realm, we may study in him the spirit of the Middle Ages, which, making its own synthesis of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, subordinated the imagination and the emotions to reason and intelligence, and poetry and dreams to theology and metaphysics, and yet, out of these materials, out of the views of Augustine, and Richard, and Albert, and Aquinas, was to build a great poem which was itself a dream, and was to explain that poetical dream as the creation of the imagination. Dante's theory of poetry, which is his account of the function of imagination, both in the *Vita Nuova* and in the *Divina Commedia*, is at once the great synthesis of mediaeval theories from Augustine and Synesius to Albert and Aquinas, and the outstanding paradox of mediaeval thought.

CHAPTER XI.

DANTE'S THEORY OF VISION

The student of Dante, the great mediaeval synthesis, naturally turns to the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, the encyclopaedia of the Middle Ages, and it is true that there is much in the views just examined which aids in explaining Dante's utterances concerning the imagination; but in many ways he is closer to Augustine and to the Neoplatonists. Like Aquinas, it is true, he is an Aristotelian, glorifying the master of those who know; but like Augustine and Synesius, and after them, Hugo and Richard, he has a more profound interest in a theory of vision, in notions to be derived from Plato and Plotinus of the qualities of perfect insight into spiritual realities. It is this dominating interest in the theory of vision which makes Dante's view of imagination the culmination of the thought of the Middle Ages.

In this theory of vision, which is his theory of poetry, the *Vita Nuova* is an essential document. If one insists that it records a state of mind more earthly, less spiritual, than that described in the *Divina Commedia*, then one may also say that the earlier work exemplifies the belief that material vision is the necessary condition for spiritual vision, the empirical bases of which Neoplatonists, and with them Augustine, had recognized through their study of the Aristotelian psychology. In this view, Dante, following them, may be said to describe in the *New Life* certain physical experiences necessary for an understanding of the spiritual experiences of the *Paradiso*. It is significant that his first great experience, the sight of Beatrice, the beginning of the poetic impulse, is recorded in the simplest terms of the descriptive psychology: 'At that moment the animal spirit, which dwelleth in the lofty chamber whither all the senses carry their perceptions, was filled with wonder, and speaking more especially unto the spirits of the eyes, said these words: *Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra.*'¹ The 'animal spirit' is obviously

¹ *La Vita Nuova*, §1, in *Tutte Le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, ed. by Dr. E. Moore, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1904, in *Dante and his Circle*, Part I, being a tr. of the *Vita Nuova* by D. G. Rossetti, Boston, 1905. p. 26. I have, at times, slightly altered Rossetti's rendering to emphasize significant phraseology.

the faculty residing in the foremost cell of the faculty psychology, the *vis imaginativa* or *phantasia*, comprehending the function of common sense.² The vision is of a quite material sort, and Dante employs, in consequence, the language of the empirical psychology. 'From that time forward,' he continues, 'Love quite governed my soul; which was immediately espoused to him, and with so safe and undisputed a lordship (by virtue of strong imagination [*per la virtù che gli dava la mia immaginazione*]) that I had nothing left for it but to do all his bidding continually.'³ Here the power of imagination is a quite material faculty of representation which enables the poet and lover to keep the image of Beatrice constantly before him—a faculty which *through the eyes* gave Love lordship over him. It is passages such as this which indicate the mediaeval source of the Renaissance tradition familiar to Shakespeare when he asks,

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?

or in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V. 1, characterizes the lunatic, the lover, and the poet as of imagination all compact.

It is this capacity which enables the poet to give to Love a definite shape: 'It came to pass that he who ruled me by virtue of my most gentle lady appeared in my imagination in the light habit of a traveller.'⁴ But when Love speaks, his imagination suddenly disappears, for it seems that Love becomes part of himself.⁵

This power of imagination so completely enables Love to dominate not only his thoughts but also his accompanying bodily states that he is led to declare that no sooner did he imagine Beatrice's marvellous beauty than he was possessed with a desire to behold her, a desire so strong that nothing could oppose it.⁶ Imagination, in its alliance with passion, for Dante, tends to overrule the dictates of reason. It is a power so strong that it is thus able to leave its impress upon both mind and body. 'Then, having sat for some space sorely in thought because of the time that was now past,

² *Vide supra*, pp. 179 ff.

³ Rossetti, *loc. cit.*

⁴ *V. N.*, 9, in Rossetti, *op. cit.*, p. 32; see also *V. N.*, 24, in *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵ *V. N.*, 9, in *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶ *V. N.*, 15, in *ibid.*, p. 41. Sometimes, however, imagination may be the ally of reason, presenting a strong visual image of Beatrice as Dante first beheld her, and causing her memory to induce a state of repentance for inordinate desires. See *V. N.*, 40, in *ibid.*, p. 73.

I was so filled with dolorous imaginings that it became outwardly manifest in mine altered countenance.’⁷

Sometimes, however, the imagination, instead of inducing physical states, is determined by them. On one occasion, when, suffering great pain, he closed his eyes, his brain, he says, began to be active as that of a frantic person and to have imaginations. ‘And at the first, it seemed to me that I saw certain faces of women with their hair loosened At length, as my fantasy⁸ held on in its wanderings, I came to . . . behold a throng of dishevelled ladies.’⁹ This process of imagining in turn induced weeping. ‘And so strong was this idle imagining, that it made me to behold my lady in death And so strong was my fantasy that I wept again in very truth, and said with my true voice: “O excellent soul!”’¹⁰ Dante thus describes in terms of ‘imagination’ the constant interaction of mental and physical states.

This type of imagination—not a mere presentative power, but a capacity for combining the materials offered by the senses—takes place in a state akin to sleep. Often it leads to error, and then it is characterized as vain, idle, or evil; it needs the check of waking experience. Thus on one occasion he represents the ladies saying to him, ‘Sleep no longer, and be not disquieted.’¹¹ Dante adds that by these words ‘the strong imagination was brought suddenly to an end’ and he knew that his imaginations were false. He perceived that his experience was a mere fantasy; and in the canzone commemorating the dream, he says that, when spoken to, ‘his soul left its new fantasy.’ In the commentary he characterizes this as being aroused from ‘a vain fantasy.’¹²

Dante’s conception of ‘fantasy’ in the *Vita Nuova* is, then, typical of the descriptive psychology of the Middle Ages. He has in mind a power capable of reproducing and combining the images derived from the senses, a power especially active and dangerous in dreams, when, influenced by physical states, it conjures up strange images, resembling but not necessarily corresponding to reality. These bring about not only wrong opinions and dangerous

⁷ *V. N.*, 36, in *ibid.*, p. 69. See also *V. N.*, 23.

⁸ *Phantasia* and *imaginatio* are synonymous throughout.

⁹ *V. N.*, 23, in *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹¹ *Loc. cit.*

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

passions but also wrong physical states, and are only to be overcome by comparison with external reality. There is nothing in the view of the *Vita Nuova* which involves a theory of mystical vision; the experiences recorded are easily expressed in terms of the empirical psychology. The mental images of Beatrice, for instance, are those immediately suggested by physical sight. This consciousness of the empirical character of these experiences as opposed to the mystical nature of the later poem gives point to the last sonnet of the early work:

Beyond the sphere which spreads to widest space
Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above;
A new perception born of grieving Love
Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.¹³

The student of Dante will be prone to ask whether the terms of this empirical psychology suffice to describe the experiences of the *Paradiso*, whether *fantasia* and *imaginatio* as conceived in the *New Life* will adequately denote the processes of insight into spiritual realities in a supra-mundane realm, or whether Dante will continue to think of his sight of Beatrice in heaven as an imaginative experience at all. The answers to these questions involve a comprehensive view of the *Divine Comedy*, an understanding of the theory of vision connected with its adequate interpretation. This, which is also his theory of poetry, comprehends a capacity not only for receiving the vision but for its adequate expression as well. This distinction in Dante's theory of poetic vision is of vital importance: neither element can be ignored. The *Divine Comedy* is not merely the result of a great capacity for vision, imaginative insight; it is perhaps the greatest conscious attempt in the history of art to express, to make intelligible, a vision. The language of the poem, we shall see, as the poet makes us conscious of his artistic problems, indicates that he reflected long and deeply concerning the nature of vision as involving problems both of comprehension and adequate expression.

One must also remember that the complete vision or dream, of which the poem is a record, is composed of many separate visions relating to various objects, having different purposes, and putting to the test different capacities of the poet not only in experiencing them but also in giving to them an adequate shape. The vision of

¹³ *V. N.*, 43, in *ibid.*, p. 77.

Paolo and Francesca is essentially different in kind from that of the grifon and the car; and, in turn, the sight of the Virgin and of the Great Rose, after the partaking of Lethe and Eunoë, is different from the contemplation of the allegorical symbols of the *Purgatorio*. These qualities, conditions, and processes of vision in the three canticles are intended to be quite different; and it becomes, then, our task to inquire into the nature of these differences, to ask of what the various visions are composed, what basis each seems to have in sense-experience, what the conditions for contemplation were, what mental faculties were brought into play, and, finally, what in each case was the poet's problem of expression of which he was conscious.

This is not to confuse a relatively simple problem of interpretation by reading into the poem purposes far from the mind of the poet: we are dealing with the most philosophical of artists, who built the account of his vision, as Aquinas built his *Summa*, upon the vast foundation of mediaeval metaphysics, and its handmaid, descriptive psychology. This interest in psychology, already observed in the *New Life*, is even more evident in the *Convivio*; and a nice use of the terms of the faculty psychology in the *Divine Comedy* is added confirmation. The key which the poet has given to the symbolical significance of Virgil and of Beatrice, and, indeed, the entire letter to Can Grande, leave little doubt of his interests; through an understanding of this we come to know what for Dante were the processes and powers by which the mind rises from a lower to a higher capacity for vision, and by what means he sought to give adequate expression even to the highest vision. Psychology and the theory of poetry in Dante go hand in hand.

If more need be said to justify the study of the psychology of vision underlying the *Divine Comedy*, one may recall that the mind's capacity for vision was a vital concern for many of Dante's great sources,—for Plotinus and Synesius, for Boethius and Augustine, for Hugo and Richard and Thomas Aquinas: each of these attempted to ascertain under what psychological conditions, under what activities of definite faculties, the mind attains the highest spiritual visions.

Which of these answers Dante has taken up into his own thought it is difficult to determine; and sometimes it seems only safe to say that he inherited the entire theory of vision of the Middle Ages from the early Neoplatonists to Thomas Aquinas. Specifically,

however, we must attribute to him a knowledge of the *Timaeus*, and the *Consolation* of Boethius, and of the more important utterances of Augustine, Hugo, Richard, and Aquinas; and we may also suspect acquaintance with certain unique views of Plotinus and Synesius. We may seldom point to a single source; we must constantly keep in mind the fact that Dante's poem is the greatest mediaeval synthesis.

We have already said that the view of imagination in the *New Life* is that of the mediaeval faculty psychology. The theory of poetry implicit in this work is apparently in harmony with this tradition: Dante seems to believe that the poet, actuated by sense-experience, i.e. the physical sight of Beatrice, was able, because of his keen sensibility, to go through a series of powerful emotional experiences, during which the external vision tended to become a purified inner state. The imagination seems to have participated in this process by keeping an image of Beatrice constantly before the mind, by giving to it a more spiritual, less material character, by presenting abstractions such as Love in concrete terms, and, finally, by abstracting the poet from the world of sense-impressions. In this view poetry as the effluence of imagination rests fundamentally upon sensible experience. In the various kinds of vision and in various capacities for vision the poet does not seem to have been interested; with the problems of the mystic he seems to have had little concern.

When, however, the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* is placed beside the glorified Beatrice of the *Paradiso*, one soon recognizes that the theory of art of the greater poem is vitally concerned with the interests of the mystic. Beatrice as the type of faith is no longer an object of physical sight; the immaterial vision is quite different from the first glimpse of the actual person and from the imagination of an ideal as recorded in the *Vita Nuova*. In turn, the capacity which Beatrice, the incarnation of Faith, gives to the poet for the contemplation of the Virgin, of the Rose, and of the intense light 'before which power failed' is a capacity seemingly not contemplated in the earlier essay in the poetry of love.

In the same way, also, the first two canticles of the *Divine Comedy* transcend the earlier poem: there is no theory in the latter which would explain the visions in *Purgatorio* of the chariot and the grifon,—which would explain vision as a kind of symbolism. There is nothing there which would account for the degrees of ideality

in the material visions of the *Inferno*: here are presented simple visual and auditory images, products of the primary faculty of imagination, having an immediate effect upon the emotions, and giving to the poet a rudimentary education in the school of sense-experience. This is, of course, closer to the imaginative experiences of the *New Life*; but there is in this canticle a description of the effect of a series of visions which sets it apart from the earlier poem and makes it a fitting introduction to the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*. The visions here are conducive to a higher morality, achieved in part through the effect of the elementary imagination upon the emotions. This discipline of the simple, presentative imagination and of the emotions is under the direction of reason: we must remember that Virgil stands as the type of reason.

This is also the function of the imagination in part of the *Purgatorio*. The visions of the first eight cantos are at least not essentially more spiritual than those of the *Inferno*. The experiences with Manfred in the third canto and with Sordello in the seventh may well be compared with those concerned with Farinata and Cavalcanti in the sixth canto of the *Inferno*. It is to be noted, however, that the emotional reactions described in the second canticle appear to be less intense, that the rational element seems to have increased: Dante is less often deeply affected, and Virgil is more often called upon for explanation.

Beginning with the ninth canto a new type of vision is introduced, not a bare record of the visions of the bodily eye, but, rather, the first of three dreams in which the objects seen are likened to objects of sense. The Siren, Leah and Rachel, and the eagle¹⁴ are not particular visual images, but symbols, types in similitude. The imagination is at work in a different way, constructing visual representations in order to aid reason in attaining truth. Similarly the ecstatic vision of the fifteenth canto, the representations of the seventeenth, and the pageant of the last cantos demand a power of vision higher than any hitherto described, and the sight of the Beatrice of *Purgatorio* 30 requires a kind of imagination transcending any that had gone before,—especially the simple imagining of the *New Life*: 'Under her veil, and beyond the stream, she seemed to me to surpass her ancient self.'¹⁵

¹⁴ In *Purg.*, 19, 27, and 32 respectively.

¹⁵ *Purg.*, 31. 82-83. The translation quoted throughout is that of A. J. Butler,

Here the function of Virgil comes to an end: the imagination no longer furnishes visions, either immediately derived from sensation or reconstructed to serve as symbols, for the sake of reason. Faith supersedes reason as guide; Beatrice takes the place of Virgil, and we enter the *Paradiso*. Just as the simplest function of imagination in the first canticle was carried over into the second, so the allegorical method of the *Purgatorio* is carried over into the last. But the visions, in turn, become less concerned with the material objects, to be apprehended by the senses, and hence more difficult to explain, because words, the symbols of thought, suggest the material, the sensible, not the immaterial and spiritual. These visions are so ineffable that, finally, when the last canto is reached, when Dante would declare how he gazed upon the light eternal, he can only confess a lack of adequate powers of expression: before this light his phantasy failed.

Such in brief is Dante's theory of poetry in terms of 'imagination' and 'vision'—a theory which through a study of explicit passages we shall attempt to substantiate. Immediately, however, two questions are likely to be asked: Will references to Dante's sources make it seem reasonable that he should have so closely related a theory of vision and a theory of imagination? Do his own explicit statements seem to justify this connection?

It was to afford a basis for an answer to the first that at the outset there was offered this very general characterization of Dante's conception of his art as the record of visions: presented in these simple terms, it will more easily be seen in its relation to previous systems. It will at once be apparent that the view of the *Divine Comedy* in comparison with that of the *New Life* suggests a community of interest with the Platonic mystics. It is seemingly one more attempt to answer the question presented by the old dualism: How far will the lower faculties, the senses, phantasy, and the passive intellect, aid in the contemplation of the highest truth, Divine Essence; how far will our instruments for attaining finite knowledge aid in knowing the Infinite? As an answer to this question the poem takes its place beside the *Symposium* and the *Timaeus* where Plato stated the problem somewhat differently: How does God make truth known to mortal man? The answer was that God

The Hell of Dante, London, 1892; *The Purgatory*, 1892; *The Paradise*, 1891. 'Her ancient self' is, of course, the Beatrice of *Vita Nuova*.

caused imaginative vision in dreams.¹⁶ If there is truth in the contention of some of earlier students of Dante that the *Divina Commedia* is only the record of a God-given dream, then the relation to the *Timaeus* becomes significant.

One must also remember that the Neoplatonists were interested in this problem of metaphysics, and that this in part accounted for their attempts to arrange mental powers in an ascending scale culminating in *intelligentia* as alone capable of attaining absolute truth—a kind of truth independent of any sensible manifestation. Among these thinkers it is Synesius who is most significant with his belief that God sends truth to men in dreams, the work of imagination,—truth which can be expressed only in terms of the senses and the imagination. It was Synesius who likened the imagination to a little boat;¹⁷ Dante refers to his poetical power, his capacity for making intelligible his vision, as the ‘little boat of [his] wit.’¹⁸ One would like to assert that Dante was well acquainted with Synesius’ treatise on dreams; but, in the absence of external evidence, one may say only point to striking similarities. It is important that the connection between ‘vision’ and ‘imagination’ had been established at the beginning of the Middle Ages.

And not alone by Synesius. Augustine had established an equally close relation, and it is likely that he is the immediate source of Dante’s theory of vision. Little need be said about Dante’s dependence in general upon Augustine; this has already been done by the poet himself, and by his commentators. No one has, however, pointed out the striking similarity of Dante’s conception of vision and that of Augustine’s *De Genesi ad Litteram*, and especially the correspondence of the three canticles of the poem to the three kinds of vision described in the tractate,—‘corporeal,’ ‘spiritual,’ and ‘intellectual.’¹⁹ The *Inferno* and the first eight cantos of *Purgatorio* are, we shall see, a series of corporeal visions; the remainder of the second canticle and a portion of the third record visions which Dante thinks of as ‘spiritual,’ specifically the work of the imagination; and the rest of *Paradiso* is a record, in the language of Augustine, of ‘intellectual’ visions, to which the lower kinds are only auxiliary,—visions in which one has direct insight into the

¹⁶ *Vide supra*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁷ *Vide supra*, p. 149.

¹⁸ *Purg.*, I. 1-2: *la navicella del mio ingegno*.

¹⁹ *Vide supra*, pp. 169 ff.

nature of virtues and vices. With visions of this latter type imagination, in his view, has seemingly little concern; but the comparison with Dante makes it necessary to remember that Augustine is thinking primarily of our powers of contemplation, while Dante is also concerned with the means and powers of expression. In other words, Dante might well agree with Augustine that the imagination as ordinarily defined has no place in the highest realm of contemplation where *intelligentia* reigns, and yet have need of the faculty when facing the problem of the artistic expression of immaterial visions.

It is also probable that Dante was acquainted with the views of Hugo and Richard, especially with the allegory of the *Benjamin Minor* with its description of Dan and Naphtalim as sons of Leah, the imagination.²⁰ If Richard is here a direct source, then Dan is to be connected with the quality of imagination of the *Inferno*, his brother with that of *Paradiso*. But again there is no direct evidence of indebtedness: we may only assert that this theory of vision, along with those of Augustine and Synesius, must be constantly kept in mind as we turn to the conceptions of the *Divine Comedy*.

The words *immaginazione* and *fantasia* are not used in the *Inferno*; but there are significant uses of cognate terms. To understand these it is first necessary to look into the psychology of the *Inferno*. Dante thinks of the process through which he is passing as one of vision. Repeatedly he records his experience as one of seeing or hearing. 'O Muses, O lofty wit [*alto ingegno*]²¹, here aid me; O mind that wrotest what I *saw*, here shall appear thy nobleness.'²² This his vision is of no immaterial sort is to be seen in the fact that his mind runs to a comparison of his own experiences with those of Aeneas: 'The father of Silvius, being yet corruptible, went to an immortal world, and was there with the senses.'²³ It was the fact that Aeneas was able to undergo experiences involving physical sensations while in a state which would seemingly rule out the activity of the senses that gave Dante hope for a similar virtue. This hope Virgil strengthens by referring to the circumstances

²⁰ See Paget Toynbee, *Concise Dante Dictionary*, Oxford, 1914, sub *Ugo* and *Riccardo*. *Vide supra*, p. 205.

²¹ Cf. *alia fantasia*, *Par.*, 33. 142.

²² *Inf.*, 2. 7-9. The italics are mine.

²³ *Inf.*, 2. 13-15.

under which he had been sent to Dante. One must remember that Virgil typifies reason: faith has enlisted reason in her service to lead an erring soul through sensible experiences (both of good and evil) to the perfect vision of Truth.

This will serve to give point to the situation in the twenty-third canto. The sight of the demons has a profound effect upon Dante. 'Already was I feeling my hairs stand all on end with the fear.' He says to Virgil: 'Master, if thou hidest not thyself and me quickly, I have fear of the Evilclaws; we have them now in rear; I imagine them so that already I feel them.'²⁴ Here we have an imagination producing intense emotion; and to this confession of the effect of the image Virgil, the symbol of reason, replies: 'If I were of leaded glass, I should not draw [*trarre*] thy outward image more quickly to me than I [*grasp, impetro*] the one within.'²⁵ Here the use of two common verbs, *trarrere* and *impetrare*, for the more technical terms obscures a common distinction of mediaeval psychology: Virgil is pointing out that even if he, the reason, had been a mirror in which images appear instantaneously, he could not have apprehended the image suggested by Dante's language more quickly than he had already comprehended the internal image which his phantasy had presented to the higher powers. Shakespeare was later to make one of his least poetical characters say that lovers and madmen have

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.²⁶

The distinction in Dante would have been just as pronounced if, like Shakespeare, he had been content with the vocabulary of psychology instead of translating into common language the notions of 'apprehend,' by *trarrere*, 'to draw to one,' and 'comprehend,' by *impetrare*, 'to seize or grasp.' Obviously he wishes to insist that the two kinds of imagination, that of the poet himself, equivalent to the instinct of animals, and that of Virgil, the human reason, may have the same effect. 'But now thy thoughts,' says Virgil, 'were coming among mine with like behavior and with like mien, so that of both I made one single counsel.'²⁷ Reason, determining upon a proper course of conduct, takes into account both the ir-

²⁴ *Inf.*, 23. 19-24.

²⁵ *Inf.*, 23. 25-27.

²⁶ *M. N. D.*, 5. 1. 4-6.

²⁷ *Inf.*, 23. 28-30.

rational and the rational phantasy. He proposes that they descend into the next pit to 'escape the imagined chase' (*l'immaginata caccia*).²⁸

Again, in the thirtieth canto, this type of imagination is seen resulting in a physical state. Master Adam craves a drop of water. 'The little brooks which come down into Arno ever stand before me, and not in vain; for their image parches me far more than the trouble by reason of which I am fleshless in the face.'²⁹ He means that he undergoes greater torment by reason of imagination than by reason of his physical state; the power of imagination which enables the damned to bring to mind past experiences of great delight is for Dante a powerful instrument of punishment. One is at once reminded of the famous words of Francesca:

Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.³⁰

The thirty-first canto is also important. Dante, coming to the circle of the giants, seems to see many high towers. What has happened is that the impressions of sense have resulted in a false image. The Master replies—i.e. Reason checks imagination—in this wise: 'Because thou speedest across through the gloom too from far off, it befalls that thou afterward goest astray in thy imagining [*nel 'maginare*].'³¹ Virgil's advice indicates the mediaeval belief in the function of reason in testing the image by actual experience: 'Thou wilt see well if thou drawest near that place how much the sense is deceived at a distance they are not towers, but giants.'³² Dante adds: 'Piercing the gross and dim mist, error fled from me.'

Thus far the imagination has been conceived as of a power giving shape to the presentations of the sense or of the memory. These may be either true or false. The result of each act recorded is a strong emotional experience. In the *Inferno* are to be found only the primary functions of the imagination, comparable to those described in the *Vita Nuova*.

These functions are also described in the first cantos of the

²⁸ *Inf.*, 23. 33.

²⁹ *Inf.*, 30. 64-69.

³⁰ *Inf.*, 5. 121-123.

³¹ *Inf.*, 31. 22-24.

³² *Inf.*, 31. 25 ff.

Purgatorio.³³ It is to be noted, however, that in connection with these the words 'image,' 'imagine,' and 'fancy' are seldom used; but, in turn, *fantasia* is involved in the description of a higher activity, and is applied to that alone. In the fourth canto, for example, Dante is unable to explain a certain astronomical phenomenon. Virgil, who stands for the rational processes, offers a scientific explanation, and adds: 'How that is, if thou wouldst be able to conceive, with inward recollection picture to thyself [*dentro raccolto immagina*] that Sion stands with this mountain in suchwise on the earth, that both have a single horizon and diverse hemispheres.'³⁴ This is a recognition of the power of imagination to aid intellect by constructing pictures for the guidance of the more abstract processes of thought. A somewhat similar function is recorded at the beginning of Canto 17: 'Bethink thee, reader, if ever in the Alps a mist-cloud has enfolded thee, . . . and thy imagination [*la tua imagine*] will be nimble in coming to see how I first beheld again the sun.'³⁵ In both of these passages it is to be noted that the image does not come directly from sense-experience; nor is it, as it were, a relic of sensation, a memory-image. In both the imagination is reproductive rather than presentative, active rather than passive. Dante has gone beyond the simple processes described in the *Inferno*—beyond the conception most emphasized in the tradition of the faculty psychology.

The seventeenth canto, to which reference has already been made, introduces a different conception. Dante had just asked the reader to recollect an experience as a means of imagining how he (Dante) first beheld again the sun. Immediately he plunges into an apostrophe of the power—not, however, suggested by this single reference, but as an introduction to experiences which are to follow. 'O imagination [*immaginativa*], that at whiles so snatchest us from external things, that a man heeds not whereas around are sounding a thousand trumpets'³⁶ This characterization is familiar enough; more than one thinker had recognized this capacity of imagination for abstracting one from the realm of actual experience. Then comes the pointed question,—a question which shows the poet's interest in a problem of psychology: 'Who moves thee, if

³³ See *Purg.*, 9. 142, where sound calls up an 'image.'

³⁴ *Purg.*, 4. 67 ff.

³⁵ *Purg.*, 17. 1-9.

³⁶ *Purr.*, 17. 13 ff. Butler translates, 'power of fancy.'

the sense set thee not forth?' Dante wishes to know what gives rise to that type of imagination which cannot be explained as the immediate result of recollected impressions. An answer follows which makes Dante's psychology—and his psychological view of the imagination—basic for his theory of poetry: 'Light [*lume*] moves thee, which is given form in heaven, of itself, or through a will which sends it down.'³⁷

To the person familiar with the important function of light [*lume*, *luce*] in the *Divine Comedy*, the connection here established between light and imagination does not pass unheeded. In the fourteenth canto of the *Paradiso*, for example, Solomon is instructing Dante: 'Wherefore that which the highest Good gives us of unearned light will be increased; light which qualifies us to see Him; whence it is meet that our sight should grow . . . nor will so great light have power to weary us.'³⁸ St. Peter Damian, in the seventh Heaven, himself called a 'light,' says to Dante: 'A divine light is concentrated upon me, penetrating through this, whereof I am in the womb, the virtue of which, in conjunction with my vision, lifts me above myself so far that I see the Supreme Essence, from which it is expressed.'³⁹ Here the complementary relation of light and vision is most explicit. Or one has only to turn to the last four cantos, flooded with light, to hear the poet: 'O splendour of God, through whom I beheld the high triumph of the realm of truth, grant me virtue to tell how I beheld it. Light is there on high, which makes visible the Creator to that creation which only in seeing Him has its peace.'⁴⁰ This was at the beginning of the last great vision. Then his sight, becoming less dim, more and more was entering through the beam of the high light which in itself is Truth.⁴¹ A moment later the Eternal Light has become too bright; the power of expression fails; the poem comes to an end.

Light, then, is the necessary complement of vision; it is the condition for sight. For the Platonic mystic whose ideal is the contemplation of Truth a human capacity for vision and a Divine gift of light must be found together. But light is something more than a means; it is the manifestation of that which one would see,

³⁷ *Purg.*, 17. 16.

³⁸ *Parad.*, 14. 46-58.

³⁹ *Parad.*, 21. 83-87.

⁴⁰ *Parad.*, 30. 97-102.

⁴¹ *Parad.*, 33. 54: a paraphrase of Butler's rendering.

Truth made manifest in God. Purified vision goes up to God, as Hugo and other mystics had insisted;⁴² Eternal Light comes down to man. And, according to Dante's doctrine in this seventeenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, this Eternal Light comes to man from above *in the form of imagination*: 'O imagination . . . who moves thee, if [when?] sense does not? . . . Light, which in heaven informs itself.'

In the *Inferno* the lower apprehensive powers sufficed: there Dante, under the guidance of Reason, came in contact almost wholly with matters of sense-experience; or, in the language of Richard in the *Benjamin Minor*, the imagination played its humblest rôle in reproducing and recollecting concrete images of those experiences. In the *Purgatorio*, however, experience is not sufficient. Imagination, it is true, is often 'set forth by sense'; but now, as light, a means to knowledge and to truth, comes to play a part of increasing importance,⁴³ imagination comes also to assume more ideal functions. Henceforth Dante speaks of the imagination, not as a faculty constantly in the service of the intellect, but, rather, as a means by which God communicates Divine Truth to men, the 'lofty fantasy' first described by Plato in the *Timaeus*, as opposed to that lower type of imagination which is concerned wholly with the impressions of the senses. The poet, as he thus transcends the empirical tradition, and seeks a psychology which will more adequately explain the higher processes of knowledge, the processes of contemplation and *intelligentia*, rises to the loftiest conception of *fantasia*. To this elementary, but essential, conception of the empiricist he has added the theory of knowledge of the mystics, and a constructive theory of imagination in harmony with it. In so doing he gives the finest artistic expression to the conception in the mind of Plato when he wrote the *Timaeus* and the *Phaedrus*, and, after him, in the minds of Plotinus, Iamblichus, Synesius, Augustine, and Richard.

This important characterization of *immaginativa*, the key to the psychology of the *Divine Comedy*, is intended to introduce notable examples of the uses of the power. As a part of Dante's education he first saw certain types of the wrathful: 'Of the impiety of her, who changed her form into the bird which most delights in singing,

⁴² *Vide supra*, p. 200.

⁴³ Light is specifically referred to in *D. C.* one hundred and sixty times. Of these references only nine are to the *Inferno*, and thirteen to *Purgatorio*, Cantos 1-8.

in my imagination [*nell'immagine mia*] appeared the traces; and here was my mind so restrained within itself, that from without came nothing then to be received by it.⁴⁴ Dante recognizes that when the imagination is active, the functions of apprehension are often hindered; the inner image impressed upon the mind from above is stronger than any image coming from the external senses. That this contrast between two kinds of imagination or phantasy is in the poet's mind is evident immediately from his use of the adjective 'high': 'Next rained down into my high fantasy [*alta fantasia*] one crucified.'⁴⁵ The language here is explicit: the internal image came as the result of no process of sensation; it 'rained down' i.e. came immediately from above, and to the superior as opposed to the inferior or presentative imagination. 'And as this image,' continues the poet, 'broke of itself, just as does a bubble whereto fails the water beneath which it was made, there rose in my vision a maiden weeping bitterly. . . . [Finally] as, when of a sudden a new day strikes on the closed sight, sleep breaks, that quivers when broken before it wholly dies, so my imagination [*'immaginar mio*] fell down as soon as light smote my face, greater by far than that which is in our wont.'⁴⁶

In the interpretation of this passage two outstanding facts are to be observed. First, Dante thinks of his imaginative faculty as conditioned by his capacity for enduring light. The power of internal vision, like that of external sight, is blinded unless it is strong enough to receive the light. Dante is as yet unable to see all the visions which are to be presented; his imagination falls down before the light. A moment later a voice says, 'Here is the ascent'; but again, great as is Dante's desire to see whence the voice came, his power fails. Just as the sun blinds by excess of light, so before the imagination, the inner eye, has been duly strengthened to accommodate itself to the light, light blinds rather than illuminates. The second vital fact is that the experience here recorded is not an instance of bodily sight; the successive images are not dependent upon sensation, but are directly communicated by a power which 'rains down' into the human phantasy such images. Dante calls this a vision; and, save for the setting, it has all the qualities of a God-given dream as contemplated by Plato in the *Timaeus*, and by

⁴⁴ *Purg.*, 17. 19 ff.

⁴⁵ *Purg.*, 17. 25 ff. I have departed from Butler's rendering.

⁴⁶ *Purr.*, 17. 31-45.

Plutarch, Synesius, and Augustine. To regard the passage in this light is to make it the possible basis of a new interpretation of the three dreams of the *Purgatorio*, in the ninth, nineteenth, and twenty-seventh cantos.

That these three dreams are related has long been assumed. That they immediately precede successive dawns, and consequently may have an important bearing upon the records of the days which succeed, has more than once been pointed out; and interesting theories have been advanced to show their place in Dante's scheme. The emphasis, however, has hitherto been upon their moral import.⁴⁷ In offering a new interpretation no attempt is made to dispute these explanations, but only to supplement them; it is reasonable to assume that an interpretation which seeks to understand these cantos of the dreams as documents of no small importance in Dante's theory of poetic vision in no wise interferes with, but rather aids, such explanations as put emphasis upon the ethical significance.

We may regard these three dreams as three attempts to get Dante to use his imagination in a proper way that he may prepare himself to grasp the visions of the earthly Paradise and of the entire last canticle. These three cantos record dreams whereby the imaginative activity is stimulated, corrected, and strengthened, that it may have capacity to receive the more intense light. This we believe that Dante had in mind.

In the ninth canto the poet is asleep just before daybreak, a time 'when our mind, pilgrim rather from the flesh, and less held by its thoughts, is in its visions as it were divine.'⁴⁸ The time is most propitious for spiritual vision; mental processes determined by the mind's connection with the body are in abeyance.⁴⁹

In a dream I seemed to see an eagle with feathers of gold, poised in heaven, with its wings open and astrain to swoop. And meseemed I was in that place where his friends were abandoned by Ganymede, when he was ravished to the consistory on high. Within myself I thought, perhaps it strikes by custom only here, and perhaps from another place it disdains to bear away aloft in its claw. Then meseemed that having wheeled a little more terrible as a thunderbolt it descended, and snatched me upward as far as the fire.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Butler, *The Purgatory of Dante*, Appendix A.

⁴⁸ *Purg.*, 9. 16-18.

⁴⁹ *Vide supra*, pp. 50, 97-8, 137, 152, 189, 214, 222.

⁵⁰ *Purr.*, 9. 19-30.

Dante's psychology would warrant calling this an imaginative experience of the type described as 'high.' It is also obviously a case wherein the image is of the allegorical type, i. e. where the thing presented is for the purpose of stimulating the intellect. This is not of the lower order of dreams, as in the *Vita Nuova*, which seem only to affect the emotions; but it has, indeed, a profound effect upon the emotions. 'There it seemed that it and I burned, and so the imagined conflagration scorched, that it behoved that my sleep broke.'⁵¹ The effect of this dream upon the emotions was so immediate, and so different from that intended, that both sleep and dream came to an end before the moral effect of the allegory had been attained. It is to be noted that the commentators, not Dante himself, have added the interpretation of this dream. The commentators are, without doubt, right in assuming that the Eagle is symbolic of the soul which aspires to the contemplation of heavenly things, and the dream thus comes to stand for an ideal Christian state; but it is more noteworthy that Dante represents himself as thinking of these objects of vision as material things rather than as symbols of spiritual realities, and hence the intended effect of the dream was lost. The vision was broken; Dante's imagination had not yet been trained to interpret spiritual vision—to treat objects of sense as signs of immaterial ideas.

The next dream is recorded in the nineteenth canto. There is no indication, however, that it comes directly from God, as did the vision of the Eagle. It seems, rather, to depend upon the sense-experiences of the day.

Then when those shades [of the slothful] were so separated from us that they could no more be seen, a new thought formed itself within me, of which more were born others and divers, and so I went idly from one to another, that I closed my eyes for wandering, and changed my musing into dream [*E il pensiero in sogno transmutai*].⁵²

Dante here records a gradual and natural transition from a state of reverie to that of dreaming. Then there comes to him in a dream 'a woman stammering, with her eyes squinting, and crooked upon her feet, with her hands deformed, and pallid of hue.'⁵³ This is a Siren; but Dante's experiences in Purgatory have enabled him to

⁵¹ *Purg.*, 9. 31-33.

⁵² *Purg.*, 18. 139 ff.

⁵³ *Purr.*, 19. 7-9.

see her as she is, a disgusting, loathsome creature. His imagination at this point presents a true image.

'I began to gaze at her,' he continues.⁵⁴ The power of imagination is again to be tested. 'As the Sun strengthens the cold limbs which the night weighs down, so my look made her tongue clear, and afterwards set her wholly upright in a little space, and so coloured her marred countenance as love will have it.'⁵⁵ Then the Siren sings. 'Her mouth was not yet closed, when a dame appeared, holy and ready, close beside me to put that one to confusion. "O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?" proudly she began to say; and he came, with his eyes fixed only on that honest one. He seized the other, and opened her before, cleaving her draperies, and showed me her belly: that awoke me with the stench that issued therefrom.'⁵⁶

Again Dante was at fault: he had been guilty of false imagination. In the earlier dream spiritual vision, i.e. according to Augustine the play of the imagination proper, had been wrongly interpreted in material terms, and, in consequence, vision for a time came to an end. In the nineteenth canto the poet, going to the opposite extreme, had through his imagination idealized a material representation of evil. The Siren, actually loathsome to the senses, had to his imagination appeared attractive; he had indulged in an unwarranted attempt to see the spiritual in the material. The lady must, therefore, remind Virgil that his function—the function of reason as the guide of imagination—is to break in upon the imaginative idealization; he must bring the dreamer back to his senses, back to reality. Dante awakes.

In the psychology underlying the *Divine Comedy*, wherein each faculty—reason, imagination, memory, sense—performs its proper function, it is evident that the higher type of imagination (*alta fantasia*) must on occasion be able to induce proper physical states, and, at other times, the simple presentative power must under the guidance of reason furnish the materials for an idealization, also the work of the higher imagination. But the imagination must know its proper function and not go astray. Some visions of the bodily eye may lead to higher visions; and some material images, on the other hand, must never be idealized. This Dante had to learn before he could use his imagination properly in the contem-

⁵⁴ *Purg.*, 19. 10.

⁵⁵ *Purg.*, 19. 10-15.

⁵⁶ *Purr.*, 19. 25-33.

plation of the earthly Paradise and of the transcendent beauties of the *Paradiso*. Even after he had reached Paradise Dante had to be reminded of this tendency to imagine falsely: 'Thou thyself makest thyself gross with false imagining, so that thou seest not that which thou wouldest have seen, if thou hadst shaken it off.'⁵⁷

The discipline afforded by these two dreams bears fruit in the interpretation of the dream involving Leah and Rachel.⁵⁸ This vision is not improperly interpreted, and hence it has upon Dante the effect intended. The awakening comes, not abruptly and through another, but naturally, at the conclusion of the dream.

Henceforth the poet seems to be in a new world,—more exclusively than before a world of vision. It is noteworthy that just as he enters upon this magnificent vision of the earthly Paradise, this vision for which his imagination had been prepared, Virgil is conscious that his function is coming to an end. 'Thou art come,' he says to Dante, 'to a part where of myself I discern no further. I have drawn thee hither with wit and with art, henceforth take thine own pleasure for guide Await no more my word or my sign; free, right, and sound is thy own judgement'⁵⁹ Dante is here seemingly declaring that in the highest processes of vision which are to follow the imagination no longer has need of reason to guide it and to interpret. When the procession of the earthly Paradise approaches, Dante, as was his wont, turned to his master for explanation; but Virgil answered him 'with a look charged no less with astonishment.'⁶⁰ Reason is at a loss to explain such images. Then the poet, whom the vision now does not blind, sets his face again to the lofty objects. Soon after, Virgil departs. Then comes the upbraiding of Dante by Beatrice, in which the emphasis is almost wholly upon his failure to grasp the significance of immaterial objects of vision:

When I was risen from flesh to spirit, and beauty and virtue had increased upon me, I was to him less dear and less acceptable; and he turned his steps on a way that was not true, following false images of good which gave back no promise unbroken. Nor did it avail me to obtain inspirations, with the which both in dreams and otherwise I recalled him.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Parad.*, 1. 88-90.

⁵⁸ *Purg.*, 27. 94-123.

⁵⁹ *Purg.*, 27. 128 ff.

⁶⁰ *Purg.*, 29. 56-57.

⁶¹ *Purg.*, 30. 127-135.

Beatrice evidently thinks of the dream-images recorded in the *Vita Nuova* as capable of counteracting the false images of good by which Dante hitherto had been influenced. So low had he fallen that only the material visions of Hell could save him. In the early process of his redemption he was not susceptible to the appeal to the higher power of imagination, *l'alta fantasia*; the higher objects of vision were yet to follow, when the poet's capacity for insight had been strengthened and disciplined. So Dante must go through Lethe: the condition suitable for complete spiritual vision is severance of all connection with past experience.

Once having been transformed by the experience of Lethe, Dante feels, not so much an incapacity for vision, as an incapacity for its adequate expression: 'Oh splendour of eternal living light, who is there [but what . . . has] his mind encumbered, trying to render thee as thou appearedst.'⁶² With this we enter upon a new aspect of the poet's theory of vision. This, which is also his theory of poetry, is not alone an account of the poet's capacity for insight, and the way in which that insight is developed; it is also concerned with the means of expression. It is like any well-rounded theory of art: it comprehends both content and means of communication. It is only natural that this second aspect of his conception of poetry should assume importance only in the third canticle; in the first two the interest was mainly in the processes by which Dante was coming to have adequate powers of vision. As he continues, however, to rise above his former capacity—and this also means above the normal capacities of his readers—, as his visions become less material, more spiritual, more the object of *intelligentia*, he comes to face the most difficult problem ever faced by poet. How can heavenly harmony be made audible to men? How can heavenly vision be made manifest? How far will ordinary means of communication suffice? What are the limitations of language as furnishing symbols for spiritual ideas? Had Dante been thoroughly Aristotelian, he would have had little difficulty; but there is in him a fundamental mysticism, an insistence that there is an ideal universe which transcends this realm known to the senses,—a universe of which this phenomenal world is neither an imitation nor yet an unrealized form,—which makes his problem even more difficult of solution than that of the Neoplatonic dualism. The consistent

⁶² *Purr.*, 31. 139 ff.

mystics had been troubled by no such problems, for they had no desire to make their visions intelligible; they were content with the statement that true vision was ineffable. Dante, however, was too essentially a poet, a creator, to be content with a consciousness of his insight unrelated to the problems of artistic communication; like Plato, he modified his idealism to fit the facts,—the facts that the world of experience is real, does also exist, and that in this world are men and women to whom he must bring his ideas and his visions if they are to live.

Aristotelian as he is in many ways, he does not, curiously enough, take refuge in the convenient and comparatively satisfactory doctrine of form and matter; but, true to a deeper strain of Platonism—or Neoplatonism—in his nature, he frankly recognizes that a gulf exists between spirit and matter, and thus involves himself in the old dualism. For him it is impossible for matter ever adequately to realize an eternal form. A notable passage of the *Convivio* expresses this thought most directly, and may thus stand as an introduction to certain passages from the *Paradiso*. Dante is discoursing of the power of Love in leading him to intelligence of his lady:

Ah me, that I have no power to tell what I hear about my Lady. And in sooth 'tis meet that I should first dismiss . . . aught that my intellect doth not [comprehend, *comprende*], and of that which is understood great part, because I should not know how to say it. Therefore, if there shall be defect in my rimes which shall embark upon the praises of that Lady, let the blame thereof rest on the weakness of our intellect [*intelletto*], and on our speech which hath not strength to report all that Love hath to say.⁶³

Dante is saying that if his verse falls short of the lofty subject matter, the verse itself is not so much to be blamed as the general limitation of the intellect in expressing spiritual truth.

For Dante, professedly following the mediaeval tradition of Aristotelian psychology,⁶⁴ *intelletto* seems to comprehend those mental powers in virtue of which man is called a rational being.⁶⁵ It seems, therefore, to have various degrees of ideality: with its

⁶³ *Convivio*, Tractate III, Canzone 2, in *Dante's Convivio*, tr. by W. W. Jackson, Oxford, 1909, p. 124. Jackson sometimes translates *intelletto* 'understanding.'

⁶⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 230.

⁶⁵ *Conv.*, 3. 2, in Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

basis in the sensitive power, it comprehends, in turn, imagination and judgment.⁶⁶ But reason is higher:

And the soul of man which is endowed with the nobility of the highest faculty, namely, reason [*ragione*], participates in the divine nature under the aspect of everlasting intelligence. For the soul in this supreme faculty is so much ennobled and so completely divested of matter that the divine light streams into it as into an angel, and hence man is called by philosophers a divine animal.⁶⁷

Here Dante conceives of reason as the soul in her most exalted mood, while intellect is ordinarily thought of as a lower activity, the passive intellect,—the power by which the mind comes in contact with the sensible world. When he speaks of imagination and judgment as attendant abilities of the soul,⁶⁸ it is apparent that he thinks of them as attendant upon intellect and not upon intelligence. All of this, it is significant to observe, Dante regards as an interpretation of *De Anima*; but it is, in part, the distorted Aristotelian psychology derived from the Arabian commentators, and, in part, Neoplatonic mysticism with its gradation of powers culminating in 'intelligence.'

It is certain, at least, that Dante thinks of intellect as connected with the sensitive nature. It was weakness of intellect, one remembers, which stood in the way of an adequate expression of spiritual truths. About this Dante becomes more specific: 'I say that our intellect for lack of⁶⁹ that virtue by which it draws to itself [*trahere*]⁷⁰ that which it perceives (I mean an organic virtue, namely, imagination), cannot rise to certain things because the imagination cannot help it, as it has not wherewithal.'⁷¹ He means that intellect, dependent upon imagination, cannot rise to vision of the immaterial on account of the limitations of a power restrained by its relations with the senses. He adds:

Such, for example, are substances separate from matter, which, although we may to some extent speculate about them, we cannot under-

⁶⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 197, 208, 211.

⁶⁷ Jackson, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶⁹ Better, 'through defect of.'

⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 235. Dante again has in mind the 'apprehensive' power of the imagination.

⁷¹ *Conv.*, 3. 4, in Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 138. 'Imagination' translates *fantasia* throughout.

stand or apprehend perfectly. . . . So that if my speculation carried me away to a region where the imagination lagged behind the intellect,⁷² . . . I am not therefore to be blamed. . . . We must know that the bounds of our capacity give wider range for thought than for speech, and wider range for speech than for the language of signs. Therefore, if our thought . . . is too strong for words, we are not to blame, since we are not the authors of this defect.

This is, perhaps, the most important passage in Dante's prose bearing upon the quality of vision demanded in the *Paradiso*, and especially upon the rôle of intelligence therein as distinguished from the rôle of intellect in the other canticles. Intelligence, the highest reach of the soul, brings one in contact with the divine,—gives one the vision of the prophet and the mystic, a vision of substance divorced from matter. Such a condition is one of ecstasy of being divorced from one's physical state. The eyes are attracted beyond the realm of physical sight directly to the source of intelligence, divine light.

Our sight then, [writes the poet in the *Paradiso*] which must needs be one of the rays of the mind whereof all things are full, cannot of its nature be so potent as not to discern that its origin is far beyond that which is apparent to it. Wherefore into the everlasting justice the view which your world receives enters within as eyesight through the sea, which, albeit it sees the bottom from the shore, on the high sea sees it not; and nevertheless it exists; but its being deep conceals it.⁷³

Expression, speech, however, demands just these terms of bodily sight. The process of bodying forth one's vision brings the imagination into play, a power necessarily concerned with objects of the senses, and thus incapable of giving form to that which is devoid of matter; the embodiment of spiritual vision involves a power which, necessarily in contact with matter, can never adequately express in its own terms that which is essentially divorced from matter. This is what Dante, the mystical poet of the *Paradiso*, might have said; but he uses the more familiar language of mediaeval Aristotelian psychology. This is, in effect, what he does say throughout the last canticle. He is almost always conscious that the objects of vision are present, and it is only now and then that he loses faith in the

⁷² Here Dante uses 'intellect' in the comprehensive sense, including 'reason,' and transcending the functions of the sensitive soul, passive intellect, including imagination.

⁷³ *Parad.*, 19. 52-63.

reality of his experiences,—that he ceases, even for a moment, to follow Beatrice. Then she takes him to task for the 'gross imagining' which hinders right vision. Dante's problem in the *Paradiso* primarily has to do with the recollection of these ineffable sights, and their representation or expression by means of language. These are problems which concern memory, imagination, and speech. Sometimes it is memory which lags, sometimes fantasy fails, and sometimes words do not suffice to utter what the soul remembers and fantasy visualizes. These, as we shall see, are but three aspects of one and the same limitation: the problem of recollecting the heavenly vision, of clothing it in terms of sense, and, in turn, of finding words for adequate expression, are but three manifestations of the problem of the rôle of imagination in the representation of immaterial vision. They are three aspects of Dante's great artistic problem, the greatest problem ever faced by poet,—the result of the determination of a mystic to seek complete expression of immaterial visions. He becomes the greatest of mediaeval poets because, with all of the faith of a Neoplatonist in spiritual realities, he insists upon finding in the realm of sensible experiences adequate symbols for what he saw when in the spirit. It is true that he fails; but in his failure he rises above his teachers, the mystics, who had consistently refused to make their visions intelligible.

This epoch-making divergence from mediaeval mysticism, and its consequences for the theory of imagination, will become apparent as we trace the poet's consciousness of his artistic problem. The last canticle opens with a declaration much in the spirit of Plotinus or of Synesius: 'The glory of Him who moves all things penetrates through the universe, and shines forth in one quarter more, and less in another.'⁷⁴ Then he adds as evidence of his problem: 'In the heaven which receives most of His light was I'—i.e. in the situation for greatest vision, and therefore in need of the highest powers of expression. 'I beheld things which whoso descends thence has neither knowledge nor power to tell again, seeing that as it draws near to its desire our understanding plunges so deep, that the memory cannot go after it.' Here it is specifically the memory, not the imagination, which lags behind the intellect. We must remember, however, that in mediaeval psychology the memory and the imagination are closely associated, and that in the Neo-

⁷⁴ *Parad.*, I. 1-3.

platonian psychology with which Dante was familiar there are two kinds of memory comparable to two kinds of imagination, the higher of which had to do with the recollection in terms of the senses of immaterial ideas. If the poet has in mind this distinction, then there is a close relation between the memory of the first canto, unable to follow the intellect, and the 'high fantasy' (*alta fantasia*) of the last, which fails to achieve a similar function. It is probable that the recognition of the limitation of the memory in the first canto is a general characterization of the inadequacy of the faculties upon which the artist must rely to embody the visions of the mystic. It is the poet's consciousness of the material and physical character of these ordinary means of expression which causes him to invoke Apollo to inspire him 'in such wise as when thou drewest forth Marsyas from the sheath of his limbs.' 'O power divine,' he adds, 'impart thyself to me until I make manifest the image [*ombra*, shadow] of the blessed realm which is stamped within my head.'⁷⁵ Dante would be freed, if possible, from the restraining conditions of his physical existence, if, at the same time, he could, like Marsyas, keep his artistic powers; but he well knows that the miracle cannot be and that he must express his vision in terms comprehensible to the human imagination. In the fourth canto Beatrice utters the truth which Dante was only later to understand: that the spiritual reveals itself through the physical, that Seraphim, for example, reveal themselves in bodily likeness 'to give a sign of their heavenliness, that it has a less ascent.' 'Thus it behoves,' she continues, 'to speak to your wit [*ingegno*], seeing that only from an object of sense does it apprehend that which it afterwards makes meet for intelligence [*intelletto*]. For this cause the Scripture condescends to your faculty, and attributes feet and hands to God, and understands something else; and holy Church represents to you with human likeness Gabriel and Michael, and the other who made Tobias whole again.'⁷⁶ Beatrice is here expounding her theory of the way of God to man, her conception of the divine art of expression; but it is also the poet's theory of the expression of visions: the immaterial is made manifest in the form of sense—through images, the work of this higher power of fantasy. In this theory of symbolism, for the first time explicit,⁷⁷ revelation of spiritual

⁷⁵ *Parad.*, 1. 19 ff.

⁷⁶ *Parad.*, 4. 40-48. *Vide supra*, p. 216.

⁷⁷ *Vide supra*, pp. 48, 113, 137, 204-5, 216, 220 n.

realities must be made in terms of sense through the imagination. 'How bright,' writes Dante, 'must needs be of itself that which was within the Sun, where I entered, being apparent not by colour but by light, though I called upon my wit and my art and my wont I could not say so that it could ever be imagined.'⁷⁸ He evidently regards the functions of wit (*ingegno*) and of art as enabling the reader to imagine. He adds: 'If our fancies [*le fantasie nostre*] are low beside so great a height, it is no marvel, for above the Sun never was eye that might go.' The Sun is here mentioned as the most intense, the highest, material light, and hence as the highest object of *physical* vision; beyond that the imagination cannot go. The passage takes one back to *Convivio*, 3. 4, and to the consciousness of the limitations of the artist expressed at the beginning of the *Paradiso*. 'Wit' (*ingegno*), the inclusive term, 'memory,' and 'fantasy' are all involved in Dante's confession of the inadequacy of art to embody the visions of heaven, the realms above the sun.

Soon after this important utterance he tells his reader to use his imagination as a means of comprehending a truth which is to be revealed:

Let him imagine, who wishes duly to understand that which I then saw—and let him keep the image, while I am telling, like a fixed rock—fifteen stars which in divers regions quicken the heaven with such pure ray that it overcomes every trammel of the air; let him imagine that wain . . . ; let him imagine the mouth of that horn . . . and he will have as it were the shadow of the true constellation, and of the twofold dance . . . since it is so much beyond our wont.⁷⁹

Only by stimulating the imagination to picture certain physical constellations, symbols, was he able in any wise to give expression to his vision.

Sometimes, however, though the memory-image may be firmly in the mind of the poet, the means of expression are lacking; his wit can find no means of calling up in the mind of the reader an image similar to his own. Thus we read: 'Here my memory outdoes my wit; for so upon that Cross Christ was flashing, that I can find no meet similitude.'⁸⁰ So, too, at the appearance of Christ in glory Dante says: 'I was like him who bethinks him again of a forgotten

⁷⁸ *Parad.*, 10. 40-45.

⁷⁹ *Parad.*, 13. 1 ff.

⁸⁰ *Parad.*, 14. 103-105.

dream [*visione*], and uses his wit in vain to bring it back to his mind.'⁸¹ Here, it is true, it seems to be memory, an aspect of wit, which is untrustworthy; but a later and more significant passage in this canto shows that the poet has principally in mind the insufficiency of his powers of expression.

If now should sound all those tongues which Polyhymnia with her sisters have made most fat on their sweetest milk, in aid of me, the thousandth part of the truth would not be reached in singing of the holy smile, and how it made the holy countenance clear. And thus in figuring Paradise, needs must the sacred poem leap like him who finds his path cut away.⁸²

Then, as though he had in mind the very question suggested in *Convivio*, 3. 4, he adds: 'But whoso should weigh the ponderous theme, and the mortal shoulder that is charged therewith, would not blame it, if beneath that it trembles'⁸³ It is significant that it is just at this point that there is reference again to the little bark: 'No roadstead for a little bark is this.'⁸⁴ Dante might have said, in the spirit of Synesius, 'In such a vast expanse, this immaterial subject matter, my bark, my wit, or, more specifically, my imagination, as a means of artistic expression, is in anything but a quiet harbor.'

This sentiment appears only at certain points in the *Paradiso*. Sometimes it is not the impossibility but the difficulty of the task which impresses him. Such a truth as this which he has gained through the gift of insight no one before has ever tried to express: 'And that which it behoves me this time to portray, voice has never borne nor ink written, nor has it been by fancy [*fantasia*] ever comprehended.'⁸⁵ This is true of the strange discourse of the eagle. But more often from this point to the end Dante is not content to say that the task was difficult. In the eighth heaven, the very one in which Dante had been when the vision of Christ in glory had become too intense for expression, saints move above Beatrice with a chant so divine that his fantasy does not repeat it (*Che la mia fantasia nol mi ridice*).⁸⁶ 'Wherefore my pen skips, and I write it not, for our imagination [*l'immagine nostro*], far more our

⁸¹ *Parad.*, 23. 49-51.

⁸² *Parad.*, 23. 55-63.

⁸³ *Parad.*, 23. 64-66.

⁸⁴ *Vide supra*, p. 233.

⁸⁵ *Parad.*, 19. 7-9.

⁸⁶ *Parad.*, 24. 24.

speech, is too lively a pigment for such draperies.'⁸⁷ The comparison is taken from the art of painting:⁸⁸ fantasy and speech are too material media, too plastic, for the drapery of the spiritual. So divine was the chant that fantasy, and, in consequence, speech, could not by their material means, their painting, characterize it at all. It is this notion which possesses the mind of the poet as the canticle approaches the great climactic vision and he cries out: 'The beauty which I beheld is beyond measure; not beyond us only, but I think of a truth that its Maker alone enjoys it in its fulness. By this passage [i. e. at this point] I own myself conquered, more than ever comedian or tragedian was overcome by the point of his subject.'⁸⁹ Dante has again gone for illustration to a kindred art, that of the dramatist, who has also his problem of the expression of the immaterial. 'For as does the sun to the sight that trembles most, so the remembrance of the sweet smile cuts my mind from itself.'⁹⁰ The vision is so high, so ideal, that the memory of it transcends any power of representation; the mind for the time being exists only in its highest functions. It is a conception thoroughly Neoplatonic. Then, to indicate that the reader has come to a new stage of the *Paradiso*,—and to a new point in his theory of expression,—he adds: 'From the first day that I saw her countenance in this life, until this view, my song has not had its pursuit [course? *il seguire*] cut short; but now my pursuit [course] must needs leave off from further following her beauty in verse, as in regard to his end must every craftsman.'⁹¹ Hitherto the bark of his wit, the vessel of his art, his shaping power, had kept to its course, following the gleam; but now he must give up the attempt to express in verse, in terms to be comprehended by the imagination, these visions of spiritual beauty, not alone of Beatrice, but of a more transcendent beauty still.

The problem of artistic expression is by no means simplified a moment later when Dante records an experience well in keeping with those of the mystics:

As a sudden flash which breaks up the visual spirits so that it deprives the eye of operation in regard to objects of much strength, so did a living

⁸⁷ *Parad.*, 24. 25-27.

⁸⁸ Dante writes: *a colai pieghe*. See *piegghiare*, to represent 'folds in painting.

⁸⁹ *Parad.*, 30. 19-24.

⁹⁰ *Parad.*, 30. 25-27.

⁹¹ *Parad.*, 30. 28-33.

light shine around me, and left me swathed in such a veil of its brightness, that naught was apparent to me. 'Ever the Love which keeps the heaven in peace, receives into itself with a salutation in such sort, to make the torch disposed for its flame.' No sooner had these brief words entered within me, than I understood that I was rising above my own virtue; and I was rekindled with fresh vision, such that no light is so pure but my eyes would have resisted it.⁹²

This is a state of ecstasy, a state wherein art is impossible. Dante beholds a light in the form of a river; this is Eunoë, which, enabling him to enter the new realm of vision, thus supplements the process begun in the partaking of Lethe. A great gulf now separates the poet from the world of sensible experience; what he sees henceforth lacks the distinctive qualities of objects of flesh and blood. It is now Naphtalim, the second child of Bilhah, in the allegory of Richard of St. Victor,⁹³ who has risen 'through visible forms to the intelligence of the invisible.' It is only through a great allegory, through comparisons with sensible things, that Dante is able to make his vision at all intelligible. Note, for example, how he describes the Virgin: 'I beheld there upon their sports and upon their chants a beauty smile, which was joy in the eyes of all the other saints.'⁹⁴ It is upon the immaterial characteristic that he seizes; and he adds: 'And if I had in telling so great wealth as in imagining, I should not dare to attempt the least of her sweetness.' If speech, he is saying, had the immateriality of imagination, even then so comparatively material, and therefore inadequate, is the imagination that he does not dare to represent even the least of the ideality of the Virgin, of Beatrice, and still less, of Christ. Here, far from accepting the view of Apollonius that phantasy in the representation of religious conceptions is free from the charges of impiety to be brought against imitation,⁹⁵ Dante asserts that the language of imagination, as well as that of imitation, falls short of adequate expressiveness: he is distinctly conscious of the impiety of endeavoring through imagination to give shape and color to the highest spiritual realities.

With the fine inconsistency, however, of Platonism at its best he clings to an art of allegorical representation through this very faculty. He seizes upon that very aspect of the aesthetic of the

⁹² *Parad.*, 30. 46-60. For 'resisted' perhaps better 'endured' (*defesi*).

⁹³ *Vide supra*, p. 205.

⁹⁴ *Parad.*, 31. 133-135.

⁹⁵ *Vide supra*, p. 114. I use 'phantasy' for *φαντασία* and *phantasia*, 'fantasy' for *φαντασία*.

Dialogues which Plato in his apparent rejection of *phantasy* as a means of artistic imitation had at least negatively suggested; and this he makes the cornerstone of his theory of poetic expression.

This conception of the nature of poetry which one finds in the *Paradiso* must necessarily end in a negative statement. We recall that according to the poet light was capable of moving the fantasy in its higher capacity: it was light, and faith in the efficacy of light, which step by step brought the imagination of Dante to its highest reach. In the last canto he reaches the zenith. 'My view, becoming undimmed, more and more was entering through the beam of the light on high.'⁹⁶ His exalted fantasy as a power of conception was coming to its loftiest function; but at the same time it was becoming less and less possible for a complementary, and no less necessary, function of fantasy or imagination to embody these spiritual imaginings, to make them communicable. 'From henceforth my sight was greater than my speech, which at such a view gives way, and my memory gives way at so great excess.'⁹⁷ Thus far he seems to be speaking of the incapacity of fantasy as it is involved in the recollection of the spiritual in terms of the material; he seems to be thinking of it primarily as a power of conception and memory. 'As is he who sees in a dream, in that after the dream the feeling impressed remains, and the rest does not return to the mind, such am I, for my vision departs as it were wholly. . . . Thus the snow loses in the sun its stamp.'⁹⁸ It is obviously a shaping power the lack of which just at this point he is mourning. Memory and speech, both aspects of fantasy in its capacity for bodying forth, have become inadequate, and hence he calls upon this highest light, this light which has been constantly drawing his fantasy up into it, to inform his memory. Though he cannot express his vision, desire and will, strengthened by faith, keep the gaze steadily upward. The fantasy as involved in conception is yet at work. The mind with gazing, writes the inspired poet, grew inflamed; but henceforth his word is shorter in regard to the mental conception than that of a nursing babe. He tries, indeed, to express his vision, to find a proper symbol for his imaginative conception; he speaks of three circles of three colors. He institutes comparisons with rainbows. Then, with full consciousness of the fruitlessness of all such attempts, he ex-

⁹⁶ *Parad.*, 33. 52-54.

⁹⁷ *Parad.*, 33. 55-57.

⁹⁸ *Parad.*, 33. 58 ff.

claims: 'Oh, how short is speech, and how indistinct beside my conception! And this [what he had written] beside what I saw is such that to call it little is not enough.'⁹⁹ The great apostrophe to light follows; and immediately thereafter the mind of the poet turns again to the thought of the inadequacy of speech: 'As is the geometer who applies himself wholly in order to measure the circle, and finds not by thinking that principle whereof he is in want, such was I before this new vision.'¹⁰⁰ Just as the mathematician, endeavoring to make his concrete image of the circle adequately express the essence of all circles, finds a problem beyond his powers because it is beyond imagination, so Dante in the realm of beatific vision is conscious of a similar limitation; his wings, he mourns, are not for this. But in a moment of perfect intuition the fullness of the vision comes; the mind is smitten through with a flash. Here all capacity for expression fails: 'To my lofty fantasy here power failed [*all' alta fantasia qui mancò possa*]; but already was swaying my desire and my will, as a wheel which is evenly moved, the Love which moves the sun and all the stars.' The vision is perfect; and it is also beyond human imagination. The poem comes to an end: memory, fantasy, speech,—all have failed.

With Dante one closes a full circle of thought. What is implicit in the Dialogues in the way of a theory of imaginative symbolism becomes explicit in the great poem of the Middle Ages; and it becomes explicit only after Dante has taken from Aristotle and from the Neoplatonists what in their theories of imagination was of constructive value. It is also noteworthy that the progress in Dante's conception of the nobility of imagination from the *Vita Nuova* to the *Paradiso* is roughly indicative of the fortunes of *φαντασία* from early materialism to the theories of constructive idealism—the idealism which, taking into account certain facts of empiricism, came more adequately to express the theory of the Dialogues. Thus it is fitting that the first portion of a history of fancy and imagination should end with Dante. In him no vital aspect of previous theory is passed over in silence; and in him is to be found the summing up in the Middle Ages of the loftiest conceptions of the imagination as the power of the poet by one of the loftiest of poets. The theory itself, it scarcely needs to be added, is the result of the highest imaginative insight.

⁹⁹ *Parad.*, 33. 121-123.

¹⁰⁰ *Parad.*, 33. 133-136.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

In tracing the development of the concepts of phantasy and imagination from the simple ideas denoted by 'appearance' and 'likeness' we found little evidence of exact usage before the time of Plato. It was suggested, however, that the philosophical problems which were to involve a nice use of these terms were being formulated by the early Greek thinkers, and that it is probable, but not certain, that the words were actually employed in making vital distinctions. At any rate, it is in Plato that the first definite theory is to be found,—a theory which evolved with his philosophy as it passed from Parmenidean monism through a bald dualism into a final critical stage. At first there was no place for phantasies, since there could be no recognition of the reality of the sensible experience from which they were derived. In the sixth book of the *Republic*, however, Plato began to modify his monism, and he recognized the existence of two realms with phantasy playing an intermediary rôle, furnishing schematic images of our thoughts in the higher realm comparable to the phantasies based directly upon sensation in the lower.

If this notion of a higher kind of phantasy in the service of reason had been applied to aesthetics, Plato might have been led to an early doctrine of the symbolic imagination. But the tenth book showed him unwilling to espouse such a view: ideas were regarded as transcendental, and hence the function of the artist, *μίμησις*, was regarded as the equivalent of *εἰκασία*, imagination, the unideal process of copying described in the seventh book. This attack brought about an unfortunate association of the term *μίμησις*, not only with the adjective *εἰκαστική* (imaginative), but also with *φανταστική* (phantastic) as implying that kind of imaginative activity which was peculiarly subjective and therefore illusory. This, the first distinction between fancy and imagination, was also in Plato's mind in the *Sophist* when in describing creative functions corresponding to the scientific processes enumerated in the *Republic*, he characterized the Sophist as a 'phantastic' artist or creator dealing in false opinion and its expression, false phantasies.

It was suggested that these two attacks might be regarded as a part of a critical philosophy which recognized the failure of the Eleatic doctrine of Pure Being to furnish adequate criteria in philosophy and aesthetics. Certain passages in the *Sophist*, interpreted in this light, would point to a belief in two kinds of divine creative activity, the second kind being the implanting of phantasies in the human mind. Man also creates in terms of phantasy, sometimes faithfully, i.e. imaginatively, as in music, and sometimes impressionistically, i.e. phantastically. There was, in addition, at this stage of Plato's thought further recognition of the function of phantasy in the service of reason.

The *Philebus*, continuing the critical philosophy, laid the foundations for subsequent analyses of phantasy in psychology and ethics, especially in the establishing of relations with memory and opinion, and in pointing to the consequences in the moral realm of the vagaries of phantasy. This aspect of ethics Stoic was later to develop. The *Timaeus* and the *Phaedrus* complete the comprehensive Platonic theory by describing the psychological conditions under which the phantasies of divine origin, glanced at in the *Sophist*, may be implanted in the lower soul in dreams,—how the lower soul acts as a mirror for phantasies which transcend discursive thought, and how these divine phantasies have important ethical functions. This was the aspect of Platonic theory which was to appeal most strongly to the Middle Ages.

Aristotle seems to have interpreted Plato's views quite literally. With a radically different basic philosophy he set up a theory of fine art which assumed the reality of sensible experience, and, in attacking Plato, divorced the adjectives *εἰκαστική* and *φανταστική* from *μίμησις*, thus attempting to break the connection between phantasy and the theory of representative art. He thereupon proceeded to vindicate the rights of phantasy by describing in *De Anima*, 3. 3 its essential functions in mediating between sense-experience and thought. He first carefully differentiated it from opinion and sense, with which it had been confused by Plato, and then defined it in keeping with his central idea of movement as 'a kind of movement resulting from sensation.' He distinguished between three kinds of phantasy: first, the simple impression, then the composite image resulting from the operations of the common sense, and finally the reproductive imagination. The first, sometimes confused with sensation, was described as a function of

the lower soul, the phantasy of the natural man, common to animals, often equivalent to instinct, impelling action through its connection with appetite and passion, and therefore often overpowering reason. This is the *φαντασία αἰσθητική*. The reproductive function Aristotle called *φαντασία βουλευτική*, operative in the higher soul, furnishing for thought mental pictures which serve as weakened sensations; there is no thought without its phantasy. This type is also powerful in conduct, tending to regulate and repress the phantasms of the lower soul. It is apparent that Aristotle did not succeed in bridging the gulf between things and ideas, and his analysis of two kinds of phantasy and two corresponding kinds of appetite only served to involve the concept of phantasy in the perplexing dualism. This also led to a conception of two kinds of memory, one of sensations and their phantasms or concrete representations, the other of thoughts and their phantasms, a notion upon which Neoplatonism was to seize.

Aristotle also ridiculed the Platonic doctrine of divinely implanted dream-phantasies. Carefully distinguishing between the primary dream-phantasy, which is in the realm of sensation, and the secondary phantasy resulting from thought, he analyzed the psychology of dreams as analogous to the psychology of waking experience. This interpretation of dreams, obviously an answer to the theory of the *Timæus*, is comparable to his analysis of memory-images in which he combats the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence.

It will be seen that at the outset the concepts of fancy and imagination were thoroughly defined in two rival philosophies. Plato, applying the standards of metaphysical idealism, seemed, on the whole, to depreciate these powers, especially as they were for him connected with the doctrine of imitation. He did, however, lay the bases for a theory of phantasy in psychology and ethics, and he made a most significant contribution in enunciating the concept of the dream-phantasy. Aristotle, on the other hand, broke the connection between phantasy and imitation, ridiculed the Platonic notion of divinely implanted phantasies, and, assuming the reality of sensible experience, laid the basis for subsequent description of the phantasy in psychology. We have, then, from the very beginning what may be called an idealistic and mystical tradition founded by Plato, and an equally well defined empirical tradition deriving from Aristotle. To the concepts of fancy and imagination in these two systems all subsequent views in classical and mediaeval thought

may ultimately be traced; and, seen in one light, this history is the record of a conflict, lasting for many centuries, between theories emanating from these two great thinkers.

In the six centuries after Aristotle the most vital contribution came from the Stoics. The Academy added little, since its main interest in establishing criteria in the metaphysical and ethical realms caused it to fall into a refined scepticism altogether depreciating phantasy. The Peripatetic school likewise seems to have made no substantial contribution, for the most part contenting itself with analysis and commentary. The paraphrase by Priscian of the lost work of Theophrastus on phantasy, for example, indicates no real contribution. Epicureanism, in turn, added no new ideas, following, as in Lucretius, the atomistic account of *visiones* (εἰδωλα) derived from Democritus.

Stoicism, indebted to Plato for its metaphysical and ethical concepts, and to Aristotle for its psychology, made a substantial contribution, especially in its definition of φαντασία καταληπτική, 'a criterion of facts produced by a real object and conformable to that object.' The 'acataleptic' phantasy was called a phantasm, and upon this opposition of φαντασία and φάντασμα was built a tetralogy of terms, including φανταστόν to denote the source of the real image, the phantasy, and φανταστικόν to correspond to the phantasm. These four terms had an interesting history in mediaeval thought.

Upon this distinction between the genuine and the illusory phantasy the Stoics erected their theory of conduct; for them the great ethical problem was 'the right use of phantasies.' Epictetus, the outstanding example of this tradition, confusing phantasy with opinion, described the moral life as impelled by phantasy in much the same way as Aristotle had described it as impelled by appetite. The achievement of the moral life for the Stoic involved the proper control of phantasy, the supremacy of reason. This ethical program, with its striking antithesis of reason and phantasy, was also to dominate the thought of the Middle Ages.

During this period there was also evidence of the persistence of specifically Platonic views, both constructive and destructive. Plutarch, in addition to preserving important contemporary views through his acute criticisms, helped to popularize the doctrine of the *Timaeus* that God implants phantasies to correct vice. The Hermetic writings, of probably the third century A.D., indicate familiarity with the view that God, who is Pure Being, is not to be

apprehended by phantasy, an instrument of the contingent and illusory. These writings, an important intermediary in the transmission of Greek thought to Christianity, indicate a possible source of a general distrust of phantasy in patristic literature. This is evident in the spurious *Recognitions of Clement*, wherein the emphasis upon the freedom of the phantasy to recombine the materials furnished by the senses suggests also a Stoic source. This doctrine of what came later to be called the productive imagination often led to an acute consciousness of the dangers of phantasy, of its liability to error.

There is little evidence in the literature of these six centuries of an aesthetic concept of phantasy. It appears, however, from the language of Plutarch, Longinus, and Quintilian, that the word was part of the terminology of the rhetoricians, both Greek and Roman, and that it was used to denote vivid mental pictures in the mind of the poet and orator dependent upon their emotional states, and, in turn, when properly communicated, capable of arousing the emotions of their hearers. This tradition may have derived from popular usage, or it may have resulted from current psychology connecting phantasy and passion, especially the views of the Stoics.

Another noteworthy discussion of *φαντασία* is to be found in a passage of Philostratus dealing with the conflict between Egyptian religious symbolism and Greek representative art. Here, in contrast to the view of the Dialogues, *φαντασία* is definitely opposed to *μίμησις* as allowing to the Greek sculptor a freedom from the charge of sacrilegious anthropomorphism implied by the latter term. To phantasy is ascribed the capacity of freely combining the materials presented by the senses, of representing an ideal form existing in the mind. It is not, however, conceived of as transcending the laws of mimetic art.

Returning to the philosophical tradition, we find that the eclectic character of Neoplatonism resulted in dissimilar and often contradictory attitudes towards *φαντασία*. There was, it is true, a fairly consistent dualism inimical to a constructive theory, as, for example, in the Plotinian notion of two kinds of beauty, the one which involved phantasy being an unideal image of the other. There was also the familiar trilogy of spirit, soul, and body, the effect of which was to deny to phantasy, related to the corporeal, any lofty function.

Plotinus, however, when he combined Aristotelian psychology with Platonic metaphysics, found for it important functions, des-

cribing it, despite his basic doctrine of emanation, as one of a series of functions by which concepts were derived from sense-impressions. But it was, in turn, defined in his theory of emanation as a weak expression of thought, a kind of memory-image of a higher type of mental activity. It thus became, on the one hand, an affair of the lower soul, connected with the body and with the passions, and, on the other hand, a capacity for reflecting higher mental states, because it was only in part corporeal. When there exists a proper harmony between mind and body, the phantasy is able to image in the lower soul the higher states of intellect. This was a most significant interpretation of the *Timaeus*, to be repeated by other Neoplatonists.

Plotinus also attempted to combine the Aristotelian psychology with the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence. With the help of *De Anima* he deduced two kinds of memory, one pertaining to the rational soul, the other to the irrational; and then, to avoid logical objection, recognized that the memory had the character of phantasy, being only in part corporeal. Having thus deduced two kinds of phantasy, corresponding to the 'aesthetic' and 'deliberative' functions described by Aristotle, and two corresponding kinds of memory, he was able to assert that it is possible to remember, not only the lower kinds of phantasy, but the phantasies of states of intellect as well. The lower kind of phantasy, he asserted, was an image of the higher, and when the higher prevailed, then a single phantasm was produced. In this argument, in which the psychologist and logician obviously won a battle over the mystic, the term *φαντασία* was more seriously entangled than ever before in the problem of dualism. His ethics also took into account this recognition of two kinds of phantasy, one connected with our instinctive, the other with our voluntary, acts, and, like the view of the Stoics, resulted in a distrust of phantasies.

Probably his most significant single utterance concerned the relation of man to nature. The soul, he said, is superior to nature, an image also of the world-soul, because the soul possesses a power of phantasy. It is tempting to deduce from this, when connected with another typical Plotinian view, the proposition, never elaborated by the Neoplatonists themselves, that phantasy is the power which enables man to see in nature its inherent capacities, and thus to make Plotinus the forerunner of a characteristic notion of modern Romanticists.

The other Neoplatonists were less original: they transmitted certain well defined traditions, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic, and in facing the insoluble dualism they made new syntheses. Porphyry, for example, had a contempt for phantasy as a function concerned with the corporeal, and, although acquainted with Aristotelian psychology, he condemned the power to the realm of sense-impressions, contradicted the dictum that every thought must have its phantasy, and objected to the Plotinian view that memory is a preserver of phantasies. But Iamblichus, his pupil, in answering certain questions of Porphyry about the relation of God to divination, gave evidence that a constructive Platonic view of phantasy persisted, that the term was frequently used in discussions of dreams and prophecy, and that the doctrine of two kinds of phantasy, the lower an image of the higher, had become a commonplace. There was also appreciation of the Platonic view that God may cause dream-phantasies to take possession of the organ of phantasy in the lower soul, and that this type of phantasy is not to be confused with the phantasy which results from a diseased condition of this organ.

In Proclus these inconsistent traditions are found side by side: he has the mystic's distrust of phantasy, but he cannot ignore its essential functions. It is a kind of intellectual power giving shape to ideas, but it is weak on account of its connections with the body,—a kind of last echo of the body, passive intellect. His aesthetic, less typical of Neoplatonism, is more important. In his commentary on *Republic X* he identified *μίμησις εἰκαστική* with faithful reproduction, and *μίμησις φανταστική* with the giving of pleasure, making a distinction which might have constituted a tradition of great importance. In an equally acute commentary upon the view of phantasy in *Republic VI* he attempted to show that Homer's poetic achievement was not confined to the lowest of four kinds of mental activity described by Plato: intelligence, thought, belief, and image-making (*εἰκασία*), imitation of a most unideal sort. Reducing Plato's four terms to two, thought and opinion, he classified both types of imitation described by Plato, 'icastic' and 'phantastic,' as forms of opinion. *Μίμησις εἰκαστική*, being objective, was a matter of right opinion; *μίμησις φανταστική*, being subjective, impressionistic, was 'beneath right opinion.' Here the dualism which resulted in the bald contrast of thought and opinion caused Proclus, like Plato when literally interpreted, to relegate all representative

art, whether faithful to its original or impressionistic, to the realm of the unideal. At another point, however, Proclus asserted that myths present supra-sensible truth in terms of phantasy, and the myth thus constitutes a kind of 'phantastic mind,'—a notion implicit in the aesthetic of Plotinus which becomes most explicit in the Victorine mystics and in Dante.

Synesius is even more representative than Proclus of the eclectic character of Neoplatonism, especially in its mixture of Platonic metaphysics with Aristotelian psychology. In the familiar trilogy of mind, soul, and nature, he found for phantasy an intermediary rôle; but when he thought in terms of the equally typical dualism, he condemned phantasy to the lower realm of 'becoming.' The doctrine of emanation almost enabled him to bridge the gulf when he asserted that phantasy helps one to know the supra-sensible in terms of sense, a notion which had been of value to Plotinus and to Proclus. For Synesius phantasy was a shaping power, giving one form to the impressions of sense, another to the supra-sensible, and only suggestive outlines to the future. As an immaterial function having no physical organ it was for him the great paradox of the human mind, a power intermediate between spirit and matter, at one extreme making one aware of the basest physical desires, and at the other enabling the soul in a properly purified state to commune with God.

That these Neoplatonic views influenced early Christian thought is evident in the correspondence of Augustine with Nebridius. The latter retained a belief in divinely implanted phantasies and in the Plotinian theory of memory which scandalized his friend. In attacking these notions Augustine, in turn, espoused the Neoplatonic notion most unfavorable to constructive theory, that the memory or recollection of the spiritual is not an affair of imagination at all.

In the psychology of *De Trinitate*, nevertheless, in part Aristotelian, he recognized the importance of phantasy. He carefully distinguished between *visio*, the external image, and imagination or phantasy proper, internal vision; and both in the distinction itself and in his objection to the current confusion of terms he did much to perpetuate Aristotelian distinctions. He described, in turn, three kinds of phantasy: that originating in sensation, *visio*, which he refused to call phantasy; the phantasy proper, which causes us to have pictures in the mind when we read history and when we compose and read myths and allegories; and finally phan-

tasy in the service of reason. This is the most faithful reproduction in the early Middle Ages of the concept of *De Anima*, 3. 3. This psychological trinity is also in his mind in the theory of vision to be found in his commentary on Genesis. Here 'vision of sense' obviously corresponds to *visio*, and 'vision of imagination' to phantasy proper; but his 'vision of intellect' pertains to no type of imagination, being pure intellect, *contuitio*. It was this view, we suggested, which was probably the source of the psychology of the *Divine Comedy*.

The importance of Augustine, it was pointed out, lies, not in striking originality, but in a great synthesis of existing materials, in keen analysis and orderly classification, in the establishing, for example, of a close relation between will and imagination, and in his elaboration of the concept of the productive or combinatory imagination. One finds, with the eclecticism, a significant blending of the point of view of the mystic with that of the descriptive psychologist.

In Boethius, also influenced by Neoplatonic views, one finds the familiar trilogy of sense, imagination, and reason, transcended, as in all mystical systems, by intelligence. Reason, in his view, as in Augustine's, transcending sense and imagination, has a capacity for concrete representation without having recourse to any organ of imagination. This, a most satisfactory way of escaping the consequences of Neoplatonic dualism, resulted in a distinct loss for imagination.

In describing mediaeval concepts we distinguished between two outstanding philosophical tendencies deriving respectively from Plato and Aristotle, the one mystical, and the other empirical and sensational, insisting upon the bases of knowledge in sense-experience. These were to be found partially united in Augustine, and may be studied in complete fusion in Dante. The tradition which begins with the reality of sensible experience finds its most typical exemplification in the faculty psychology, which, with its tripartite division of the brain and its arbitrary distinctions, resulted in many ways in a loss for the theory of imagination. In this psychology, which usually placed imagination in the foremost cell of the brain, reason in the middle, and memory at the back, there were significant developments. Nemesisius, for instance, helped to perpetuate the Stoic tetralogy of terms. Avicenna distinguished between imagination as presentative and reproductive and phantasy

as productive or combinatory. Averroes made a vital distinction between memory and imagination. Bacon comprehended under the term *cogitatio* some of the processes commonly ascribed to imagination. In Albertus Magnus one finds the most comprehensive psychology of imagination and the best example of the evolution of the Aristotelian tradition. Under the term *vis imaginativa* he comprehended all functions ordinarily attributed to phantasy: presentative, retentive, schematic, productive, and rational, or, as he names it, *excogitativa*, a capacity which makes it the most noble of the apprehensive powers, a kind of reason. He also throws light upon mediaeval usage, commenting upon the fact that *imaginatio* and *phantasia* were often synonymous. In translating the *φαντασία* and *φάντασμα* of John of Damascus by *imaginatio* and *phantasia* respectively he not only helped to preserve the famous Stoic tradition, but he involved *imaginatio* in a distinction which was to have important consequences in accentuating the contrast first observed by Plato between the imaginative and the fanciful. Mediaeval usage was, on the whole, unfavorable to any recognition of the creative capacity of *imaginatio*. *Phantasia* implied the loftier functions, the greater freedom,—but at the same time the greater liability to error.

The mystics, as distinguished from the descriptive psychologists, were mainly interested in evaluating these mental powers as means to vision. Hugo of St. Victor, for example, in a theory of vision suggestive of Synesius, made imagination the instrument of the communion between spirit and body, and looked upon it as a power necessary to a rational interpretation of the universe, a kind of vestment. With a mystic's fear, however, of the functions of the lower soul, he added the warning that reason must never fall in love with this vestment. Richard of St. Victor had a similar view: imagination is a kind of handmaid to reason, a comparatively low kind of contemplation, by which one approaches the loftiest kind of vision as the Platonist through the contemplation of earthly beauty rises to the perfect Form of Beauty. In Richard's illustration of this species of contemplation he, like many Neoplatonists, nearly achieved a conception of the symbolic imagination. This type of imagination in the service of reason was also regarded as productive or combinatory, and it had an important ethical function in enabling one to contemplate the rewards and punishments of the future life. Here Richard, building upon Plotinus, Synesius, and Augustine, paved the way for Dante.

The less constructive side of mysticism is seen in Bonaventura. In him one meets the ascending series of powers culminating in intelligence, with imagination in a humble rôle, and the Augustinian trinity of sense, imagination, and intellect, with imagination playing its common intermediary part. There is an important criticism of a mediaeval Aristotelian tradition of the passive intellect, which, for Bonaventura, probably following Neoplatonic conceptions observed in Proclus, is nothing but imagination, and, therefore, as in large measure corporeal, is not worthy to be called a kind of intellect. At best, imagination is an instrument of the intellect, but it is never to be identified with it. It is a dangerous power, disturbing the will, and its false coinage, sometimes called *phantasia proterva*, is plainly synonymous with 'apparition.' An apparition, as a product of one of the sensitive powers, was, of course, in part corporeal; but, as specifically the product of the imagination, it had also an incorporeal character so that it might be implanted by a demon. This belief in the power of demons to influence human beings through imagination, derived ultimately from the *Timaeus*, and apparent also in Jerome, Cassiodorus, Maimonides, and Thomas Aquinas, was to constitute one of the most persistent beliefs of the late Middle Ages and of the Renaissance.

For Maimonides, whom we have treated with Thomas Aquinas as an example of a partial synthesis of mystical and empirical views, the contrast between intellect and imagination is basic. The fruit of the temptation was the substitution of imagination for reason. The former lacks the analytical and abstracting powers of the intellect; it can only perceive and combine, and, therefore, being no criterion of reality, cannot be ascribed to God. Maimonides therefore criticized the Mohammedan notion that our ability to grasp an object in imagination constituted a criterion of its reality. This suggests in more than one way the persistence of the Stoic tradition.

There is, however, in Maimonides a more constructive view, Platonic in part, of the rôle of imagination in prophetic vision. The images resulting from vision, he said, appeal in part to the rational and in part to the imaginative faculties. Prophetic power is made possible by a perfection of the mental and moral faculties, which in turn results in a proper receptivity of the imagination. In this view, at least as old as Synesius, our visions are said to be untrustworthy when the imagination functions at the expense of the intel-

lect. A perfect condition is brought about when the active intellect properly controls the imagination. In dealing with the problem of the adequate expression of these visions, it was pointed out, Maimonides came closer than previous thinkers to an explicit doctrine of symbolism.

In Thomas Aquinas there was a more complete synthesis, the result, in part, of his assimilation of the views of Nemesius, Augustine, John of Damascus, Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventura, and Albertus Magnus. On the one hand, there is to be found in the *Summa Theologica* a typical exposition of the Aristotelian psychology of imagination insisting upon the sensible bases of knowledge and repeating the commonplace that there can be no thought without its phantasm. On the other hand, he is related to the mystics through his interest in the power of angels, both good and bad, to affect the imagination. Angels, he said, influence the imagination through local movements of the spirits and humors, and in turn enlighten the intellect that it may interpret. By means of these images impressed upon the imagination when the senses are at rest the soul received knowledge of the future. This view, inherited perhaps from Maimonides, probably had much to do with the attitude toward imagination in the subsequent literature of demonology. He also gave the weight of authority to the traditional fear of the imagination which we have traced through Christian literature from the time of the spurious Clementine writings.

And, finally, in Dante one finds the complete mediaeval synthesis. The psychology of the *Vita Nuova*, typically Aristotelian, emphasizes the functions and dangers of the lower or presentative function. The *Divina Commedia*, transcending this, expounds in terms of *fantasia* and *immaginativa*—the terms are synonymous—a theory of vision derived from Neoplatonism and from early Christian mysticism, and especially from Augustine. It is the simplest type of imaginative experience which is described in the *Inferno* and the first eight cantos of the *Purgatorio*; but beginning with the ninth canto one may trace a new kind of imagination operative in the three great dreams, and in the seventeenth canto this power is recognized as one used by God for the communication of visions, specifically the 'higher' phantasy of the *Timaeus*. That this is a loftier function of the imagination is to be seen in the fact that the poet entering after the dreams upon the visions of the earthly Paradise no longer needs Virgil, who typifies the human reason.

Thus far we have been dealing with imagination as involved in poetic conception. But Dante also understood that imagination was involved in expression, and in the *Convito* he says that there is such a problem because of the limitation of the intellect, here used as a comprehensive term. Man's intellectual nature, says the poet, is kept from the loftiest visions, to be contemplated by intelligence alone, because of its connection with the imagination, one of the sensitive faculties. But expression is essentially a matter of memory, imagination and speech; and Dante, in whom the artist won a notable victory over the mystic, determining to express his vision, knew that he must have recourse to imagination. At the end of the *Paradiso*, however, he seems to despair of adequate expression, and, after partaking of Eunoë, is acutely conscious of a great gulf between the immaterial realm of his vision and that other world to which he must go for language, the realm of imagination and memory. Then the imagination of representative art is found altogether wanting, and he can only resort to allegory, to the products of the symbolic imagination described by Richard of St. Victor. His poetic instinct had already caused him to conceive of his imagination, a power of the lower soul, as capable of illumination from above; but here, at the end, he fails to find a complementary function of imagination which will give to these heavenly visions their necessary concrete shape—will make them visible to the human imagination. When Dante's poem closes with the declaration that the beatific vision is beyond even his lofty phantasy, the theory of poetry implicit in the *Timaeus* received what may truly be called its most imaginative expression. With Dante, we have said, we complete a full circle of thought.

This summary should have made apparent, first of all, the existence of certain well-defined traditions of fancy and imagination deriving from Plato and Aristotle, and receiving their principal modifications at the hands of the Stoics and the Neoplatonists. These four classical philosophies are of fundamental importance, not only in shaping basic concepts, but in determining the growing complexity of their evolution. There is involved, together with that first opposition of Platonic idealism and Aristotelian psychology, all of those new combinations of attitude and theory of which eclectic systems are capable; yet, in these compromises and syntheses, these repeated attempts to achieve a harmony of seemingly

discordant elements, one may trace the evolution of two outstanding points of view,—that of the mystic, who thinks in terms of emanation, and that of the empirical psychologist, who conceives of the imagination as helping to shape ideas out of sensible experience.

It is evident that these main streams of thought about fancy and imagination are not primarily aesthetic, and that the terms are not in their origin aesthetic terms. It is true that, at the outset, Plato employed them in discussing painting and poetry and made vital aesthetic distinctions, that Philostratus and Proclus probably represent a continued use of the words in the theory of fine art, and that Quintilian and Longinus represent a persistent tradition among the rhetoricians. But the concepts themselves were, for the most part, molded by philosophy, and, specifically in the order of their importance, by metaphysics, psychology, and ethics. Definitions in these three realms largely determined the nature of the terms which were to become so important in the vocabulary of the aesthetician and the critic.

Of these three branches of philosophy it was metaphysics, and especially epistemology, which had the most decisive influence: the word *φαντασία* was at the heart of some of the most vital problems of Greek speculation. It meant an appearance: that fact can never be forgotten if one is to appreciate its central position in metaphysics from Democritus to Proclus, and the associations, both favorable and unfavorable, to the development of a constructive theory, which this position involved. When the phantasy was at first regarded as something existing outside of the mind, a mere object of thought, it was then regarded as physical, corporeal. When, later, it was conceived of as a state of mind, the implications of corporeality naturally clung to it, and it was not easily differentiated successively from phenomenon, sensation, and impression. In turn, regarded sometimes as a state of mind and sometimes as a product of the mind, it became the center of the basic epistemological problem of the genuineness, the reality, of our mental experiences, the correspondence of the phantasy or appearance to an object external to the mind. Thus the problem of *φαντασία* for Plato and the Academy, the Stoics and the Sceptics, was the problem of appearance and reality itself, of metaphysical truth and error. This is the fundamental definition of *φαντασία*, and of *imaginatio* when regarded as a translation of the Greek term.

The word was also profoundly affected by other metaphysical problems. Those who insisted upon the immutable and eternal character of reality had no place in their thought for a concept of phantasy; but those who conceived of reality as that which was progressively coming into existence, 'becoming' rather than 'being,' as the Greek phrased it, had for the phantasy an important function. This, of course, immediately suggests the bearing of the conflict of idealism and materialism upon the concept of *φαντασία*. There is an attitude represented by Plato at times, the Academy, the Hermetic writings, and the more consistent mystics, which, denying the existence of matter, also denied the reality of phantasy as pertaining to the physical and hence the non-existent. From uncompromising idealism, with its contempt for matter, and its unwillingness to recognize the reality of the experience whereby mind comes into contact with a physical universe, there came no constructive view of phantasy. One is doomed to disappointment who comes to philosophical idealism expecting a lofty conception of phantasy and forgetting that the word itself suggests the contingent, the material, the fleeting,—in a word, the unreal. A thoroughly consistent idealism swept away the bases for a theory of *φαντασία*.

But fortunately there was within idealism and its religious progeny, mysticism, a fine inconsistency which enabled phantasy to come into its own. We have said that pure idealism is monistic, recognizing the reality of the One, and condemning all else—matter, phenomena, and with these sensation and phantasy,—to the realm of 'not-being.' It was fortunate, indeed, for the concepts which we are studying that Plato, who started out with this uncompromising view, came to a point where he was willing to face the facts of experience and to demonstrate, according to his own account, 'that not-being is.' That enabled him to assume that matter, and hence sensation and phantasy, were real. From that admission he could proceed to the notion that there were two worlds, one of Ideas, and the other of material objects, sensations, phantasies, and such thought as might be derived from them. In this metaphysical dualism phantasy obviously belongs to the lower realm, and, caught in the meshes of an arbitrary classification, seems incapable of assuming lofty functions. But when these thinkers came to establish a relation between these two worlds, then phantasy had its opportunity. If the lower was regarded as an image of

the higher, phantasy, the pictorial capacity, might be the mirror for receiving the image or reflection. Or, if the attempt was made to bridge the gulf, then phantasy, by nature both corporeal and incorporeal, might be conceived of as the indispensable intermediary. Metaphysical dualism, despite the fact that it relegated *φαντασία* to the lower world of sensation and passive intellect, was, among idealists and mystics, the necessary foundation for a constructive theory of phantasy. It made possible the most significant utterances of Plato, the Neoplatonists, and the mediaeval mystics. Without that dualism the determining of the concept of phantasy would have been left to the materialists; and the result would probably have been a view closely approximating that of the Epicureans.¹

But it is also to be observed that this bald dualism involved phantasy in what was probably its most serious predicament. When two realms were described, phantasy belonged to the lower, and it was only by the use of analogy that it could be regarded as operative in the higher. In the attempt to bridge the gulf the problem created by the dualism was shifted upon the concept of phantasy: two phantasies were described, the one an image of the other. The problem is not solved; the theory of phantasy only becomes more complex, more inextricably a part of the great metaphysical dilemma which idealism, taking into account the reality of experience, had created.

This, then, is briefly the account of the definition of *φαντασία* in metaphysics. It is not difficult to see how these notions influenced definitions in psychology, and how these psychological views are second only in importance. The metaphysical concepts are of primary importance: but it is also true that the definition of our terms in psychology engaged the attention of the greatest number of thinkers between Plato and Dante, and that more subtle distinctions were made and more definite traditions were developed in this field than in any other. In this sense the psychology of imagination is most important in having resulted in the greatest

¹ This recognition of the existence of two realms was also the basis for a comparable division in ethics, psychology, and aesthetics. If the metaphysical idealist had not posited a lower realm involving phantasy, there could have been no psychological distinction between a phantasy giving concrete shape to sensations and a similar power giving concrete shape to our thoughts; between two kinds of memory connected with these two kinds of phantasy; between a lower and a higher phantasy in the moral life; and finally, between the phantasy operative in the *Vita Nuova* and the *alta fantasia* of the *Paradiso*.

body of crystallized theory. In Plato the definition in psychology is not of prime importance; but in Aristotle, the Stoics, the Neoplatonists, and increasingly through the Middle Ages, it comes to predominate over the purely metaphysical interest. A large part of this study has been in the history of psychology. It may be true that much of this is monotonous repetition and variation, showing little originality; but it is none the less important. Anticipating the course of the history of imagination after Dante we may add that definition in psychology becomes more and more the primary concern. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, the views, in the field of criticism, of Bacon, Hobbes, and Addison, to take only three, are the direct appropriation of a psychological tradition of the imagination current in the Middle Ages. It is also obvious that the more criticism interests itself in the nature of the poetic mind, the more it must necessarily be indebted to psychology.

The ethical concept, almost always the direct result of definition in the two fields just considered, also constitutes an important tradition. The Stoics are good examples of the influence of metaphysics upon ethical views: the distinction between the cataleptic and acataleptic phantasy paved the way for the use of the term in Epictetus. Aristotle illustrates the relation of psychological to ethical definition: his distinction between the 'aesthetic' and 'deliberative' phantasy is at the bottom of his contrast between the phantasy connected with instinct and the phantasy directive of our voluntary acts. Quite naturally, those who distrusted phantasy as a criterion of reality or feared it as a part of the lower soul connected with passion and appetite also deprecated its free play in the moral realm; and since Platonic, Stoic, and Neoplatonic thinkers showed this distrust, and only in Aristotle was a strictly scientific attitude to be found, it was but natural that classical and mediaeval ethics should, for the most part, concur in the judgment of the Stoics that this power, capable of influencing conduct by giving concrete shape to our desires and aversions, should be kept within the bounds of reason. In determining the attitude toward phantasy in any particular period one must always take into account this almost universal fear of the power in the moral realm,—a fear only accentuated by the recognition of its freedom to recombine the materials of experience. We are far from the day when a poet could exclaim, 'The great instrument of moral improvement is the imagination,' identifying it with the principle of love. For many centuries the

more essential instrument of moral improvement, even in Christian ethics, was to be the reason.

This glorification of reason, this basic rationalism of much of classical and mediaeval thought, must ever be kept in mind in studying the evolution of theories of imagination: it operated against constructive appreciation, not only in ethics, but also in the two fields of thought already described. It is sometimes difficult for us to evaluate this contrast of reason and phantasy, always at the expense of the latter, perhaps the most persistent commonplace in the history of our terms. We are prone to think of Blake's identification of imagination with the divine and his depreciation of reason, of Shelley's contrast of imagination and reason as respectively the synthetic and analytical principles in human thought, or of Wordsworth's characterization of the imagination as 'reason in her most exalted mood.' But those views were to come as the result of a long and fascinating evolution; and to appreciate that evolution one must remember that from Plato to Dante phantasy was defined in the light of a belief predominantly rationalistic. It is sometimes the ideal of the supremacy of *vous*, sometimes of the mystic's *intelligentia*, which is, indeed, above reason, and sometimes merely of *intellectus* or *ratio*, but it is always some aspect of rational mind or of supra-sensible mind which furnishes the criterion of the imagination. The dualism only accentuated this contrast. For some mystics it was something of a concession for imagination to be regarded as a handmaid of reason, and to be allowed to come into the presence of her mistress. Here is the background for the commonplace of the criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the contrast of judgment and fancy, reason and imagination, as it runs through Hobbes and Dryden, Addison and Dennis and Pope, Burke and Samuel Johnson. The counsel of classical and mediaeval thought, whether mystical or empirical, is to keep the phantasy, allied to passion and appetite, in proper subjection to the reason.

This is one of the pervasive traditions of philosophy as it affects the imagination. Another equally comprehensive notion may seem to involve a paradox when one asserts that the recognition of the essential freedom of the imagination increased the fear of the power and served to strengthen the counsel of rationalism. We have traced through the Middle Ages the tradition of a productive or combinatory function which results in chimaeras and castles in Spain,—a

tradition which was to prove most valuable in aesthetic, as we have seen in the study of Philostratus, and was to result in the first characterization of the imagination as a creative faculty. But the immediate result of the emphasis upon this function and this freedom was not to emancipate but to curb. For the mediaeval psychologist, as for Dryden, centuries later, fancy, the nimble spaniel, had need of the leash of reason.

We have now to consider how out of the materials furnished by metaphysician, psychologist, and moralist were fashioned the aesthetic concepts of fancy and imagination. Before, however, we try to see how certain attitudes towards these powers were carried over into the theory of fine art, we must take into account the influence of the prevailing Greek standard denoted by the term *μίμησις*. In the first place, it caused *φαντασία* to be subjected to a standard primarily metaphysical. When Plato, connecting *φαντασία* and *εἰκασία* with *μίμησις*, asserted that 'phantastic' imitation was less real than 'icastic' imitation, he was applying to fancy and imagination a metaphysical standard of reality. When he, and Neoplatonists after him, censured the 'phantastic' creations of artists as images of things rather than of ideas, they were also applying the standards of philosophical idealism. When Philostratus asserted the ability of the artist through phantasy to recombine the materials of sensation and thereby to conceive of the ideal 'on the analogy of the actual,' he, too, was accepting the Greek ideal of representative art and the philosophical connotations of *μίμησις*. Plotinus and Proclus likewise accepted this criterion which caused them to judge the imagination of the artist on the grounds of reality and of idealism.

This subjection of *φαντασία* to non-aesthetic criteria wrought an especially great injustice, because these criteria were peculiarly foreign to the nature of the term to be judged: 'imitation' suggests an objective standard, the comparison of the artistic product with external reality or with a Form existing in the mind. 'Phantasy,' 'appearance,' suggests the subjective, and hence the study of the constitution and processes of the creative mind. So long as the Greek ideal of imitative art prevailed, *φαντασία*, and *imaginatio* regarded as a synonymous term,² were tried in a court hostile to them,

² This contrast of 'imitation' and 'imagination' applies only to *imaginatio* as a translation of *φαντασία*, not to *εἰκών* and *εἰκασία*, which, denoting 'image' or

judged by the rigid standards of representative art, which sometimes stressed the faithfulness of the copy, and sometimes the ideality of the idea copied.³ But *φαντασία* was capable of an independent development, and a most fascinating aspect of this study has been the tracing of the preparations for a rebellion against the tyranny of a theory of art inimicable to its growth, to note the materials, derived almost wholly from philosophy, which were to enter into another aesthetic structure built in part upon a recognition of the essential functions of the imagination.

First among these materials for an aesthetic of the imagination was a comprehensive account of its reproductive function. It is true that this account resulted in a partial depreciation, in Platonism, Stoicism, and Neoplatonism, of the power because of its relations to other functions of the lower soul; but an emphasis upon these very relations of phantasy to the emotions and appetites was an essential basis for an aesthetic concept. We have already observed the development of such a tradition among the rhetoricians, —a view of *φαντασία* as enabling the poet and orator to conceive of objects as actually before their eyes, and to undergo and communicate emotional experiences attendant upon those images. This was to constitute perhaps the most persistent theory of imagination in the fine arts until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Closely connected with this recognition in aesthetic of the reproductive function and its connection with the emotions came the

'copy,' are associated with 'imitation.' To the extent that *φαντασία* by association came also to suggest a copy, as it evidently did to Plato, Aristotle, and others, it also came under the laws of mimetic art. I am only pointing out that, regarded as appearance, the peculiar impression of the mind, it denotes something utterly foreign to the notion of a faithful imitation, and has, in consequence, its own genius.

³ Schweitzer, (*op. cit.*, *vide supra*, pp. 9-10) has also emphasized this basic contrast; but it has been his purpose to prove that the concept of phantasy tended to supplant the ideal of 'mimesis,' while I have proceeded under the conviction that from beginning to end, from Plato to Proclus, the dominating criterion is that of representative art. I have endeavored to show that there was a gradual emancipation of *φαντασία*, mainly as the result of speculation in metaphysics and keen analysis in psychology; but I am not convinced that the Stoics played so essential a rôle in this emancipation as Schweitzer ascribes to them. S. H. Butcher ('"Imitation" as an Aesthetic Term' in *op. cit.*, pp. 121-162) has also attempted to relate the terms in the thought of Aristotle, bringing to bear upon the concept of 'imitation' the description of the phantasy in *De Anima*. In so doing he probably does some violence to the thought of Aristotle, since, as we have seen (*vide supra*, p. 65), the latter consciously avoided the connection of the terms.

appreciation of its productive, or better, combinatory, rôle, by which the artist was able to recombine the materials of sense, to join the head of a man with the body of a goat, to create, in a word, a realm of fiction as opposed to fact. It was this freedom, exercised in another way, which Philostratus had in mind when he freed the religious artist from the charge of impiety involved in the assumption of faithful reproduction. Although this conception of a productive or combinatory function, operative both in waking experience under the control of the will and also in dreams, was recognized in the basic systems of thought, it was the work of the early Middle Ages to develop the theory, although seldom specifically in fine art. Had Augustine remained a teacher of rhetoric, and as such left for us a sketch of psychology comparable to that now to be found in *De Trinitate*, one would, perhaps, find an account of this productive function in poetry and oratory, evidence of a rhetorical tradition dating back to the time of Quintilian. We might also have had a similar account from Synesius and Richard of St. Victor, if their interests had not been predominantly metaphysical and religious, interests which led to a fear of this free play of phantasy. But such speculation is probably futile. If the Middle Ages had coined the term, 'creative imagination,' this is necessarily the function which they would have denoted by it; and this, we may say in anticipation, is what critics did mean by 'creative imagination' when the term first came to be used. There may be truth in its characterization in the nineteenth century as 'only a mode of memory emancipated from time and space'; but the fact remains that this free play of the power was for the Middle Ages and for the Renaissance its loftiest rôle regarded as an active and voluntary agent.

And here it is in point to speak of the significance for aesthetic of the classical and mediaeval distinctions between fancy (*φαντασία*, *phantasia*) and imagination (*imaginatio*, *εἰκασία*). We have become so accustomed to thinking of imagination as the loftier power that it is difficult for us to regard 'phantasy' as the name for the free play of the creative impulse. We must, remember, however, that *φαντασία* was the comprehensive term; and *εἰκασία*, literally, 'imagination,' when contrasted with it, as by Plato and Proclus, suggested, not artistic freedom, but the making of copies, imitation,—what Leigh Hunt was later to characterize as 'the sense of the

plaster-cast cry about the streets.'⁴ That association, from the beginning, of imagination with the theory of representative art, with the standard of fidelity to the object, rather than with the coloring of the mind, was the most important deterrent to a recognition of the imagination as the noblest creative function. Φαντασία was comparatively free from those implications; but its virtue was also a disability. Its freedom, judged by non-aesthetic standards, implied its dangers. Hence, while 'fancy,' when differentiated from 'imagination,' was recognized as the creative power, there was no adequate description of its rôle in the fine arts.

The problem was still further complicated when *imaginatio* came to translate φαντασία, instead of being reserved to translate εικασία. The mediaeval translation into Latin of the four Stoic terms confirmed this tendency: φαντασία became *imaginatio*, and φάντασμα became *phantasia*. This, of course, tended to substantiate the distinction between the faithfully imaginative and the fanciful, or, as mediaeval usage had it, the phantastical, and is the origin of the critical commonplace of the nineteenth century. When thinkers like Avicenna and Albertus Magnus, adhering to this usage, distinguished between *phantasia* and *imaginatio*, it was to denote the free play of the power, the combinatory functions, by the former, and simpler presentative and reproductive powers by the latter.

Although this differentiation seems, from our point of view, to involve a depreciation of *imaginatio*, it must be remembered that this superior freedom of *phantasia* also carried with it a stigma not attached to the other term,—the charge of being a dangerous power. *Imaginatio*, naturally, when used as a synonym of *phantasia*, had the same accusation brought against it; but when later a word was needed to denote a kind of creative activity higher than *phantasia*, it was to the term *imaginatio* that writers turned as at least free from the charge of being the source of error and illusion. It was also more capable than *phantasia* of becoming the symbol of creative activity defined in an aesthetic other than that of representation. When the 'image' was redefined in the light of another philosophical principle, then the faculty of imaging, *imaginatio*, could denote capacities of the human mind not contemplated by Greek empiricism.⁵

⁴ Leigh Hunt, *What is Poetry?* ed. by A. S. Cook, Boston, 1893, p. 33.

⁵ There is also historical warrant, however, for the recognition by Jean Paul

We may now return to the description of materials out of which were to grow the outstanding theories of imagination in aesthetic. We have already noted the importance in classical and mediaeval thought of the simple reproductive function attended by emotion, and of the combinatory or productive power. There was also a view enunciated by Plato, and elaborated by Aristotle, that the imagination is essential to give shape to thought. It is true that Plato failed to note the aesthetic implications of the idea, and talked about the mathematician's sketch of a triangle, not about the imaginative symbols of poet and painter; and Aristotle, in turn, intent upon a complete divorce of 'phantasy' and 'imitation,' developed in his psychology alone his notion of the function of phantasy in the processes of *διάνοια*. But this idea was destined to become an important aesthetic doctrine, and, after the approximations of Proclus, Synesius, Augustine, Richard of St. Victor, and Maimonides, it eventually found full recognition as a principle of fine art in Dante. Here, in this classical concept of the phantasy in the service of reason, is to be found the origin of the theory of artistic symbolism.

Even more important, had it been developed, would have been the notion in Plotinus that the mind, having the power of phantasy which nature lacks, is thus superior to it. But this seems never to have constituted a tradition, and hence one is not justified in attempting to establish a connection between it and a similar notion in Romantic theory.

We are on more certain ground when we point to the persistence of the view deriving from the *Timaeus* as the most important single element in classical and mediaeval theory leading to the ennoblement of the imagination. It is true that there is in this view no recognition at the outset of the mind as an active agent; there is no appreciation of the power of the poet to throw over objects the coloring of a highly sensitive soul. There is, however, a recognition, specifically in terms of 'imagination' and 'fancy,' of the inspired nature of the poet, an assertion of the similarity of the poetic experience to prophecy and madness and love—an identification of the lunatic, the lover, and the poet. This is the tradition, running

Richter and other German writers of the supremacy of phantasy, *Phantasie* as opposed to *Einbildungskraft*: the term, we have seen, did not imply a material copy, and it had already been the accepted symbol for the combinatory or productive function.

through the Neoplatonists, the mystics, Maimonides, and Dante, which frees imagination from the laws of matter much more thoroughly than it had been freed by any other concepts. It made *φαντασία* an instrument of supra-sensible knowledge, thus emancipating it from the tyranny of reason. In most aspects of the theory of imagination which we have examined reason is the mistress, and imagination at best a faithful servant; but in this view, best exemplified in Dante, the processes of imagination are operative in Paradise, whither reason cannot follow. This, of course, is not identical with the concept of later critical philosophy, which, joining subject and object in an ideal metaphysical unity, laid the basis for the appreciation of the imagination in the nineteenth century. It is, however, the mediaeval equivalent of this view; it is the loftiest conception of which the Middle Ages were capable, and, like the last great vision of the *Paradiso*, was the culmination of the philosophy of vision of the time. Indeed, we are not certain that it is not quite as satisfactory an account of the nature of poetic insight as later ages were to afford. Without that theory of imaginative vision, the culmination in the Middle Ages of Platonic and Neoplatonic mysticism, the later view would, perhaps, never have come into being. But to trace the evolution of the concept from the height of mediaeval mysticism to the fruition of the critical philosophy in the views of poets and critics of the nineteenth century, to study a repetition from the Renaissance to the time of Schelling of the struggle of the forces represented by Platonism and Aristotelianism, is the scope of another volume.

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